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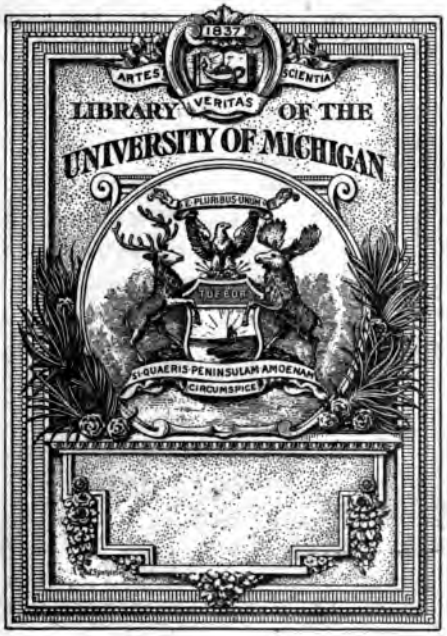
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THE MINOR POEMS OF HOMER.

THE

BATTLE OF THE FROGS AND MICE;

HYMNS AND EPIGRAMS:

TRANSLATED BY

PARNELL, CHAPMAN, SHELLEY, CONGREVE, AND HOLE.

WITH INTRODUCTIONS

BY HENRY NELSON COLERIDGE,

AND

A TRANSLATION OF THE LIFE OF HOMER

ATTRIBUTED TO HERODOTUS.

NEW-YORK:
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1872.

THE

LIFE OF HOMER:

ATTRIBUTED TO

HERODOTUS.

TRANSLATED BY K. R. H. MACKENZIE.

WITH

THE EPIGRAMS;

TRANSLATED BY GEORGE CHAPMAN.

134326

THE

LIFE OF HOMER.

HERODOTUS of Halicarnassus, in the pursuit of truth, writes this history of the birth and life of Homer.

When, many years ago, the city of Cumæ in Æolia was built, there flocked to it many persons of the various nations of Greece, and, among them, were some from Magnesia.[1] One of these was Menapolus, the son of Ithagenes, the son of Crito. This man, far from possessing riches, had scarcely the means of subsistence. When settled in Cumæ, he married the daughter of Omyretis. By this marriage he had one child, a girl, whom he called Critheïs. The husband and wife both died, leaving this child very young. The father, before his death, appointed Cleanax of Argos, one of his most intimate friends, her guardian.

In the course of time, by a secret intrigue, Critheïs found herself with child. This was for some time concealed; but Cleanax, having discovered it, was much afflicted by the occurrence, and privately reproached her with her fault, laying before her the dishonor she had brought upon herself. To repair the evil as much as

[1] The present Mausa.

possible, was now the subject of his thoughts. The inhabitants of Cumæ were at this time building a town in the basin of the Hermæan Gulf.[1] Theseus, wishing to render the name of his wife immortal, called it Smyrna. He was a Thessalian, and of one of the most illustrious families in that country. His father was Eumelus, son of Admetus, from whom he inherited a considerable property. Cleanax conducted Critheïs secretly to that town, and committed her to the charge of Ismenias of Bœotia, a friend of his, on whom the lot had fallen to go to that colony.

Critheïs, being near her confinement, resorted to a festival held on the bank of the river Meles, in company with other women ; while there, the pangs of childbirth came upon her, and she brought forth Homer, who, far from being blind, had excellent eyes. She named him Melesigenes, having been born by the river Meles. Critheïs remained some time with Ismenias, but afterward left him, supporting herself and son by the work of her hands and upon the charity of her fellow-citizens, educating the boy as she could.

There lived at Smyrna, at this time, a man named Phemius, a teacher of literature and music ; who not being married, engaged Critheïs to manage his household, and spin the flax he received as the price of his scholastic labors. She acquitted herself of the task so satisfactorily, and conducted herself so modestly, that she won his esteem. He proposed to marry her, and, as an inducement to it, promised to adopt her son, intimating that the boy, carefully educated and instructed, would

[1] The present Gulf of Smyrna; the river on which that place is situated, then called Meles, now Sarabat or Kedous.

become a clever man; for he perceived in him a thoughtful and studious disposition. Critheïs, moved by these solicitations, consented to become his wife.

Care and an excellent education seconding the happy talents with which nature had endowed him, Melesigenes soon surpassed his school-fellows in every attainment, and when older, he became as wise as his instructor. Phemius died, leaving him heir to his property; his mother did not long survive her husband. Melesigenes, now his own master, taught in the school of Phemius, where every one applauded him. He excited the admiration, not only of the inhabitants of Smyrna, but also of the numerous strangers who resorted to that port on account of the trade carried on there, particularly in the exportation of corn, much of which came from the environs of the town. These, when their business was finished, frequented his school in great numbers.

Among these strangers was one whose name was Mentes. He had come from the island of Leucadia[3] to buy corn; the vessel in which he arrived was his own; he was also a lettered man and well educated for those times. This man persuaded Melesigenes to close his school and accompany him on his travels. He promised to defray all the expenses and give him a certain stipend, telling him that, while he was young, it was imperative on him to see with his own eyes the countries and cities of which he might thereafter have occasion to speak. These reasonings prevailed, I think, the more easily, as he had some idea at that time of devoting himself to the study of poetry. He quitted his school, and embarking

[3] Now called Santa Maura, one of the Ionian Isles, on the coast of Epirus.

with Mentes, examined all the curiosities of the countries which they visited, and informed himself of every thing by interrogating every one he met. We may also suppose that he recorded in writing all the information he thought worthy of preservation.

After having travelled in Tyrrhenia and Iberia, they arrived at the island of Ithaca. Melesigenes, who had already suffered pains in his eyes, now became much worse. Mentes, obliged to go to Leucadia, his native country, on business, left him at Ithaca, in the care of a particular friend of his, called Mentor, the son of Alcimus. He promised Melesigenes to return to him, that they might continue their voyages. Mentor's assistance was given to Melesigenes most zealously. He was rich, and was reputed a just and hospitable man. It was here, and during this period, that Melesigenes acquired a knowledge of all the legends respecting Odysseus. The inhabitants of Ithaca assert, "that Melesigenes became blind in their island." I myself incline to the opinion that he was cured of his disease, or that it was alleviated, and that afterward, when at Colophon, he permanently lost his sight. And so think the Colophonians.

Mentes having sailed from Leucadia, arrived at Ithaca. Finding Melesigenes cured, he took him on board, and proceeded from place to place with him, coming at length to Colophon. It was there that Melesigenes was again attacked by the disease, which, raging more malevolently, left him totally blind. This misfortune determined him to depart from Colophon, and to return to Smyrna, where he studied the art of poetry and harmonics with much attention.

After some time, the bad state of his affairs induced

him to go to Cumæ. Setting out, he travelled over the Hermæan plain, and arrived at Neon-teichos, a colony of Cumæ. It is related that, being at that city, near an armorer's work-shop, he recited these, his first verses:

> Lend hospitable rites, and house-respect,
> You that the virgin, with the fair eyes decked,
> Make fautress of your stately-seated town,
> At foot of Sædes, with the high-haired crown,
> Inhabiting rich Cuma; where ye taste
> Of Hermus' heavenly fluent, all embraced
> By curled-head whirlpits; and whose waters move
> From the divine seed of immortal Jove.

For the river Hermus flows near Neon-teichos, and Mount Sædena overlooks both. The name of the armorer was Tychius. These verses gave him such pleasure, that he invited Melesigenes to his house. Full of commiseration for a blind man reduced to beggary, he promised to share all that he had with him. Melesigenes having entered, seated himself, and in the presence of several of the citizens, manifested his capabilities, by singing the exploits of Amphiaraüs against Thebes,[4] and the Hymns to the gods. Each gave his opinion, and Melesigenes having drawn a just conclusion from their criticisms, his hearers were struck with admiration.

Whilst at Neon-teichos, his poems furnished him with the means of subsistence. The place he customarily occupied during the recitation of his verses, is still shown. It is held in great estimation even now, and is shaded by a poplar which was planted about the time of his arrival.

[4] This was probably the poem known by the title of the Thebais, attributed by Callinus (B.C. 700) to Homer.

But at length, compelled by necessity, and finding scarcely sufficient to keep him alive, he determined to proceed to Cumæ, to see if he could meet with better fortune there. When ready to depart, he recited these verses:

> Swiftly my feet sustain me to the town
> Where men inhabit, whom due honors crown;
> Whose minds with free-given faculties are moved,
> And whose grave counsels best of best approved.

Having departed for Cumæ, he went by way of Larissa, considering that road the most convenient. It was there, as the Cumæans say, that he composed the epitaph of Gordius, King of Phrygia, at the request of the father and mother of the wife of that prince. It is engraven on the pillar of the monument of Gordius, where it may yet be seen.

> A maid of brass I am, infixed here
> T' eternize honest Midas' sepulchre.
> And while the stream her fluent seed receives,
> And steep trees curl their verdant brows with leaves;
> While Phœbus raised above the earth gives sight,
> And th' humorous moon takes lustre from his light,
> While floods bear waves, and seas shall wash the shore,
> At this his sepulchre, whom all deplore,
> I'll constantly abide; all passers by
> Informing, "Here doth honest Midas lie."

When Melesigenes arrived at Cumæ, he frequented the assemblies of the elders, and there recited his verses. Admiring their beautiful structure, they fell into an ecstasy of delight. Joyful at the reception his poems had prepared for him among the Cumæans, and at the pleasure with which they had heard him, he one day proposed to them that, if the state would main-

tain him, he would make the city of Cumæ very celebrated. His hearers approved of the proposition, and engaged him to present himself before the council, where they would support him with all their interest. Melesigenes, encouraged by their approbation, presented himself at the House of Assembly on an audience-day, and, addressing the person who had the office of presenting those who had any request to prefer, he begged to be allowed to enter. This officer did not neglect to present him the first opportunity that offered. Melesigenes, as soon as the ceremony was over, addressed the assembly regarding the proposition he had formerly made. His speech ended, he retired, in order that the representatives might deliberate on the answer necessary to give him.

He that presented him, and all those representatives belonging to the Elders' Assembly where he had recited, voted for him. It is said that only one opposed the measure, giving for his reason "that if they thought to feed *homers* they would find themselves encumbered with useless folks." From this time, the name of Homer, bestowed thus opprobriously on Melesigenes, in consequence of his misfortune, was most generally used in speaking of him; for the Cumæans in their dialect call blind persons *homers*. Strangers always used this name in discoursing of the poet.

The Archon concluded with saying "that it was impolitic to maintain the blind man." This caused the majority of the representatives to vote against the measure the second time, and thus the Archon obtained more votes than opposers. The presenting officer communicated with Melesigenes on the subject, informing

him of the progress of the debate and of the decree. Deploring his ill-fortune, he recited these verses:

Oh! to what fate hath father Jove given o'er
My friendless life, born ever to be poor?
While in my infant state he pleased to save me,
Milk, on my reverend mother's knees, he gave me,
In delicate and curious nursery:
Æolian Smyrna, seated near the sea,
Of glorious empire, and whose bright sides
Sacred Meletus' silver current glides,
Being native seat to me: which, in the force
Of far-past time, the breakers of wild horse,
Phriconia's noble nation, girt with towers;
Whose youth in fight put on with fiery powers.
From hence, the muse-maids, Jove's illustr'ous seed,
Impelling me, I made impetuous speed;
And went with them to Cuma, with intent
T' eternize all the sacred continent
And state of Cuma. They, in proud ascent
From off their bench, refused with usage fierce
The sacred voice, which I aver is verse.
Their follies yet, and madness borne by me,
Shall by some power be thought on futurely;
To wreak of him, whoever, whose tongue sought,
With false impair, my fall. What fate God brought
Upon my birth, I'll bear with any pain,
But undeserved defame, unfelt, sustain.
Nor feels my person (dear to me, though poor)
Any great lust to linger any more
In Cuma's holy highways; but my mind
(No thought impaired, for cares of any kind
Borne in my body) rather vows to try
The influence of any other sky,
And spirits of people bred in any land,
Of ne'er so slender and obscure command.

On leaving Cumæ for Phocæa, he pronounced a malediction against the Cumæans to the following effect; "That there never might be born in Cumæ a poet who

could render it celebrated and give it glory." Arrived at Phocæa, he supported himself as he had done at Cumæ and elsewhere, assiduously frequenting the places of assembly, at which he recited his verses. There was at that time an unprincipled man named Thestorides at Phocæa, a teacher of the rudiments of literature. Having observed the talents of Homer, he offered to shelter and take care of him, if, as a recompense, Homer would permit him to take down his verses in writing, and if he would do the same with those he might hereafter compose. Homer, being poor and destitute, accepted his offer.

During his residence in Phocæa at the house of Thestorides, he composed the Little Iliad,[5] of which the first two verses are as follows :

> Ilion, and all the brave-horse-breeding soil,
> Dardania, I sing; that many a toil
> Imposed upon the mighty Grecian powers,
> Who were of Mars the manly servitors.

He next composed the Phocæid,[6] as the Phocæans say. When Thestorides had written down that poem and the rest he had received from Homer, he neglected him, and, determining to appropriate them to himself, left Phocæa; Homer thus addressed him :

> Thestorides! of all the skill unknown
> To errant mortals, there remains not one
> Of more inscrutable affair to find
> Than is the true state of the human mind.

[5] The Little Ilias is generally considered to be the composition of Lesches or Lescheos, who flourished about the eighteenth Olympiad.

[6] Of this poem nothing is known. It was probably a history of the founding and progress of the town of Phocæa, now called Phokia.

Thestorides, having sailed from Phocæa, retired to Chios, where he established a school of literature, and by his having recited Homer's verses, which he did, attributing them to himself, he obtained great praise and much money. As to Homer, he continued in the same way of life as heretofore, being supported by his verses.

Shortly afterward, some merchants of Chios, having come to Phocæa, went to the assemblies where Homer recited. Surprised to hear those verses recited which they had so often applauded when spoken by Thestorides, they informed Homer that there was at Chios a teacher of literature who was much esteemed for the recitation of the same poems. Homer, perceiving who it was, prepared for a journey to Chios. Having gone down to the port, he found no ship that was going to that island, but met with one about to sail for Erythræ,[7] to fetch timber. As that town seemed to be convenient for passing over into Chios, he accosted the seamen courteously, entreating them to allow him to accompany them, and, as an inducement, promised to recite some of his verses to them. They agreed to this, and on his having entered the vessel and seated himself, after extolling their hospitality, he addressed these verses to them:

Hear, powerful Neptune, that shak'st earth in ire,
King of the great green, where dance all the choir
Of fair-haired Helicon; give prosperous gales,
And good pass, to these guiders of our sails:
Their voyage rendering happily directed,
And their return with no ill fate affected.
Grant likewise at rough Mimas' lowest roots,
Whose strength, up to her tops prærupt rocks shoots,

[7] A town of Ionia opposite Chios, now called Ritre.

My passage safe arrival; and that I
My bashful disposition may apply
To pious men, and wreak myself upon
The man whose verbal circumvention
In me did wrong t' hospitious Jove's whole state,
And th' hospitable table violate.

Arrived at Erythræ with favorable winds, Homer remained for the rest of the day on board the vessel; but next morning begged the sailors to allow some one of them to conduct him to the town. They granted his request. He departed, and having come to Erythræ, which is situated in a naked and rocky country, recited the following verses:

Worshipful Earth, giver of all things good!
Giver of even felicity; whose flood
The mind all-over steeps in honey-dew,
That, to some men, dost infinite kindness show;
To others, that despise thee, art a shrew;
And giv'st them gamesters' galls; who, once their main
Lost with an ill chance, fare like abjects slain.

On his arrival he made inquiries concerning the navigation to Chios. A person who had known Homer in Phocæa, remembering him with regard, approached and embraced him. Homer begged his aid, which he readily gave.

Not finding any ship in the harbor, they went to that part of the strand whence the fishermen usually put off, where they found one about to sail for Chios. The conductor of Homer entreated them to take him across with them, but, deaf to his prayers, they continued their preparations for departure. Homer on this occurrence made the following verses:

Ye wave-trod watermen, as ill as she
That all the earth in infelicity

Of rapine plunges; who upon your fare
As starved-like-ravenous as cormorants are;
The lives ye lead, but in the worst degree,
Not to be envied more than misery.
Take shame, and fear the indignation
Of him that thunders from the highest throne,
Hospitious Jove, who, at the back, prepares
Pains of abhorred effect for him that dares
The pieties break of his hospitious squares.

The fishermen, all being ready, at length departed, but being driven about by adverse winds, were forced to return. They found Homer still seated on the strand. Hearing the noise of their return, he addressed them thus: "The winds are contrary: receive me on board, and they will change." The fishermen, regretting their inhospitality, promised not to desert him if he would come on board.

He enters the vessel, they leave the shore, and now they approach the opposite coast. They begin to fish. Homer passed the night on the sea-shore, but at the dawn of day he departed. Wandering about, he came to a hamlet called Pithys, where he lay down to rest. During his sleep the fruit of a pine-tree fell on him. Some call this fruit by the name of strobilus, others call them pine-cones. The following verses were made by Homer on this occasion:

Any tree else bears better fruit than thee
That Ida's tops sustain, where every tree
Bears up in air such perspirable heights,
And in which caves and sinuous receipts
Creep in such great abundance. For about
Thy roots, that ever all thy fruit put out,
As nourished by them, equal with thy fruits,
Pours Mars his iron-mines their accursed pursuits.
So that when any earth-encroaching man

Of all the martial brood Cebreaian
Plead need of iron, they are certain still
About thy roots to satiate every will.

For about this time the Cumæans were building Cebrene, on the heights of Mount Ida, near the place where the iron-mines are.

Homer, having set out from Pithys, went toward a troop of goats, being attracted by their cries. The dogs, seeing him approach, began to bark at and annoy him. Glaucus, (for that was the name of the shepherd,) hearing his cries, ran hastily, calling his dogs back and menacing them. This man, surprised to see a blind person alone, and not knowing how he came there, was rendered speechless from astonishment. Having accosted him, he asked him how he came to an uninhabited place, where there were no paths, or who had guided him thither? Homer related his misfortunes to him. Glacus had a tender heart, and was touched by the narration. He guided Homer to his own house, lighted a fire, prepared a repast, and setting it before him, pressed him to eat.

The dogs, instead of eating, continued to bark at Homer, as dogs usually do at strangers. Homer, observing it, recited these verses:

Glaucus! though wise enough, yet one word more;
Let my advice add to thy wisdom's store,
For 'twill be better so. Before thy door
Give still thy mastiffs meat; that will be sure
To lie there, therefor, still; and not endure
(With waylaid ears) the softest foot can fall;
But men and beasts make fly thee and thy stall.

Glaucus, finding the advice good on trial, praised the giver of it more than ever. When they had eaten,

animated conversation followed. Homer narrated his adventures in the various countries and cities he had seen. Glaucus was delighted; but as it was time to sleep, they went to rest.

The following morning, Glaucus thought it necessary to inform his master of the agreeable acquaintance he had made. Confiding his flocks to the care of his fellow-slave, and leaving Homer in the house, assuring him that he would not fail to return quickly, he departed. Arrived at Bolissus,[8] a small town at a short distance from the farm, he related to his master all he knew of Homer, speaking of his arrival as an astonishing thing, and demanding to know his wishes on the subject. His master did not like the occurrence, and blamed Glaucus for his foolishness in admitting a blind man to his table. Nevertheless, he ordered Homer to be brought to him.

Glaucus, on his return, related to Homer all the particulars of his visit, and begged him to follow him thither, telling him that all his future happiness and good fortune depended on his going to Bolissus. Homer acquiesced in what he said. Glaucus presented him to his master, who found him to be a man of information and talent, and offered to retain him in his house if he would instruct his children, who were yet very young. Homer accepted these proposals. It was at Bolissus, in the house of this Chian citizen, that he composed the Cercopia,[9] the Batrachomyomachia, the

[8] Now called Voliso, a small town on the north-eastern coast of Chios, near Cardamyle.

[9] Included by Suidas and Proclus among his works. The word signifies "deceivers."

Epichlidia,[10] and all those other amusing books and poems that have gained him such celebrity. When Thestorides heard that Homer was in Chios, he left the island.

Some time after, Homer begged the Chian citizen to take him to the town of Chios. He there established a school, in which he taught the maxims of poetry to young people. He acquitted himself of this task so efficiently, in the opinion of the Chians, that the greater part held him in high estimation. He thus acquired a considerable fortune, married, and had two daughters, one of whom died single; the other married a Chian.

He shows great gratitude to his benefactors in his poems, particularly to Mentor of Ithaca, in the Odyssea, on account of his having taken care of him during his blindness, while in that island. He mentions his name in that poem, placing him amongst the companions of Odysseus, and relates that that prince, on his departure for Troy, appointed him steward of his house and lands, knowing him to be the most just and worthy man in Ithaca. Homer often mentions him in other parts of his poem; and when Athenê is represented speaking to some one, it is under the form of Mentor. He also testifies his gratitude to Phemius, who, not content with instructing him in literature, had also maintained him at his own expense. It may be observed in these verses particularly:[11]

> To Phemius was consigned the chorded lyre,
> Whose hand reluctant touched the warbling wire:
> Phemius, whose voice divine could sweetest sing
> High strains responsive to the vocal string.

[10] So called, it is said, because when he sang to the boys, they rewarded him with fieldfares.

[11] Odyssey I. 154. Pope's translation.

He also celebrates the sea-captain with whom he had travelled through so many lands. His name was Mentes, and these are the verses :[12]

My birth I boast . . . . .
From great Anchialus, renowned and wise:
Mentes my name; I rule the Taphian race,
Whose bounds the deep circumfluent waves embrace:
A duteous people and industrious isle,
To naval arts inured and stormy toil.

He also speaks of the armorer Tychius, who had hospitably entertained him at Neon-teichos. The verses in his praise occur in the Iliad, thus :[13]

Ajax approached; before him, as a tower
His mighty shield he bore, seven-fold, brass-bound,
The work of Tychius, best artificer
That wrought in leather; he in Hyla dwelt.
Of seven-fold hides the ponderous shield was wrought
Of lusty bulls; the eighth was glittering brass.
This by the son of Telamon was borne
Before his breast.

These poems rendered Homer celebrated in Ionia, and his reputation began to spread itself in the continent of Greece. On this account, many persons visited him during his residence in Chios, and some advised him to go to Greece. He had always desired to do so, and thus the counsel pleased him.

He had praised the town of Argos very frequently, but remembering that he had nowhere mentioned Athens, he introduced some verses into the larger Iliad in its praise, where he speaks of that city in the

[12] Odyssey I. 180. Pope's translation.
[13] Iliad, VII. 219. Derby's translation.

most flattering manner. It occurs in the "Catalogue of Ships":[14]

> Athens' well-built city . .
> The noble-souled Erectheus' heritage;
> Child of the fertile soil, by Pallas reared.

He then highly extols Menestheus. "He excels," says he, "in arranging the chariots and infantry in order of battle." Here are the lines:[15]

> These by Menestheus, Peteüs' son, were led.
> With him might none of mortal men compare,
> In order due of battle to array
> Chariots and bucklered men.

He placed Ajax, son of Telamon, near the Athenians; he commanded the Salaminians. That is in following verses:[16]

> Twelve ships from Salamis with Ajax came,
> And they beside the Athenian troops were ranged.

Lastly, in the Odyssey, he feigns that Athenê, after an interview with Odysseus, goes to Athens, the town she honored above all others:[17]

> The winds to Marathon the virgin bore:
> Thence, where proud Athens rears her towery head,
> With opening streets and shining structures spread,
> She passed, delighted with the well-known seats;
> And to Erectheus' sacred dome retreats.

After inserting these lines in his poems, Homer prepared to set out for Greece, and passed over to Samos,

[14] Iliad, II. 547. Derby's translation.
[15] Iliad, II. 552. Derby's translation.
[16] Iliad, II. 577. Derby's translation.
[17] Odyssey, VII. 81. Pope's translation.

on his way thither. The Samians were employed on his arrival in celebrating the Apaturian games. An inhabitant of Samos, who had seen him in Chios, observing him descending from the vessel, ran to inform his countrymen of the arrival of the poet, whom he praised most enthusiastically. The Samians deputed him to fetch Homer. He immediately retraced his steps, and meeting Homer, thus addressed him: "Chian host, the Samians celebrate the Apaturian festival; the citizens bid you to the feast." Homer consented, and accompanied the messenger.

During their walk, they encountered some women offering a sacrifice to Kourotrophos;[18] the priestess observing him, said angrily to him, "Man, get thee from our sacrifices." Homer reflected awhile on these words, having asked of his conductor who had addressed them to him, and to what deity they sacrificed. The Samian replied, "that it was a woman sacrificing to Kourotrophos." On this, Homer composed and repeated the following lines:

> Hear me, O goddess! who invoke thine ear,
> Thou that dost feed and form the youthful year,
> And grant that this dame may the loves refuse,
> And beds of young men, and affect to use
> Humans whose temples hoary hairs distain,
> Whose powers are passing coy, whose wills would fain.

When arrived at the place where the Phratrium feasted, Homer paused on the threshold and recited these verses to his conductor, while a fire was kindling

[18] Kourotrophos is, with some probability, supposed to be identical with the Roman Lucina.

in the hall; though some contend that the fire was not lighted until afterward:

> Of men, sons are the crowns of cities' towers;
> Of pastures, horses are the most beauteous flowers;
> Of seas, ships are the grace; and money still
> With trains and titles doth the family fill.
> But royal counsellors, in council set,
> Are ornaments past all, as clearly great,
> As houses are, that shining fires enfold,
> Superior far to houses naked and cold.

He entered, and, seating himself with the Phratrium, received much attention and respect from its members. Here he passed the night.

The next day he went out. Some potters having observed him while they were mending their fire, invited him to enter, and not the less readily from having a knowledge of his talents. They entreated him to sing some of his verses, promising to recompense him for his kindness, by presenting him with some of their vases, or in any other way they could. Homer sung them those verses, which are called "The Poem of the Furnace:"

> If ye deal freely, O my fiery friends,
> As ye assure, I'll sing, and serve your ends.
> Pallas, vouchsafe thou here invoked access;
> Impose thy hand upon this forge, and bless
> All cups these artists earn, so that they may
> Look black still with their depth; and every way
> Give all their vessels a most sacred sale.
> Make all well burned; and estimation call
> Up to their prices. Let them market well,
> And in all highways in abundance sell;
> Till riches to their utmost wish arise,
> And as thou mak'st them rich, so make me wise.
> But if ye now turn all to impudence,
> And think to pay with lies my patience;

Then will I summon 'gainst your furnace all
Hell's harmfull'st spirits; Smaragus I'll call,
Sabactes, Asbest, and Omodamus,
Who ills against your art innumerous
Excogitates, supplies, and multiplies.
Come, Pallas, then, and all command to rise;
Infesting forge and house with fire, till all
Tumble together, and to ashes fall;
These potters' selves dissolved in tears as small.
And as a horse-cheek chides his foaming bit,
So let this forge murmur in fire and flit,
And all this stuff to ashy ruins run.
And thou, O Circe! daughter of the Sun,
Great many-poison-mixer; come, and pour
Thy cruelest poisons on this potter's floor;
Shivering their vessels; and themselves affect
With all the mischiefs possible to direct
'Gainst all their beings, urged by all thy fiends.
Let Chiron likewise come; and all those friends
(The Centaurs) that Alcides' fingers fled,
And all the rest too that his hand struck dead,
Their ghosts excited; come and macerate
These earthen men; and yet with further fate
Affect their furnace; all their tear-burst eyes
Seeing and mourning for their miseries,
While I look on and laugh their blasted art
And them to ruin. Lastly, if apart
Any lies lurking, and sees yet, his face
Into a coal let th' angry fire embrace,
That all may learn by them, in all their lust,
To dare deeds great, to see them great and just.

He passed the winter at Samos. At the Neomenia,[19] he frequented the houses of the rich, where he sang the Eirisionic hymn, thus earning his subsistence. During his visits, he was usually surrounded by the children of the most noble men of the island.

[19] New moons.

The turrets of a man of infinite might,
Of infinite action, substance infinite,
We make access to; whose whole being rebounds
From earth to heaven, and naught but bliss resounds.
Give entry then, ye doors; more riches yet
Shall enter with me; all the graces met
In joy of their fruition, perfect peace
Confirming all; all crowned with such increase,
That every empty vessel in your house
May stand replete with all things precious.
Elaborate Ceres, may your larders fill
With all dear delicates, and serve in still.
May, for your son, a wife make wished approach
Into your towers; and rapt in, in her coach
With strong-kneed mules. May yet her state prove staid
With honored housewiferies; her fair hand laid
To artful loom-works; and her nak'd feet tread
The gum of amber to a golden bead.
But I'll return; return, and yet not press
Your bounties now assayed with oft access;
Once a year only, as the swallow prates
Before the wealthy spring's wide open gates.
Meantime I stand at yours; nor purpose stay
More time t' entreat. Give, or not give, away
My feet shall bear me; that did never come
With any thought to make your house my home.

These verses are sung every time tribute is levied in the honor of Apollo Pythos.

The spring having arrived, Homer desired to leave Samos for Athens. He sailed for that place, in company with some Samians, and arrived at the island of Ios.[20] They did not stop at the town, but some distance off, on the sea-shore. Homer, feeling himself very ill, was carried on shore. Contrary winds retarding the departure of the vessel, the travellers remained several days at anchor. Some of the inhabitants visited Homer, and they

[20] The present Nio.

no sooner heard him speak, than they felt a great degree of veneration for him.

While the sailors and townspeople were speaking with Homer, some fishermen's children ran their vessel on shore, and descending to the sands, addressed these words to the assembled persons: "Hear us, strangers, explain our riddle if ye can." Then some of those that were present, ordered them to speak. "We leave," said they, "what we take, and we carry with us that which we cannot take." No one being able to solve the enigma, they thus expounded it: "Having had an unproductive fishery," say they in explanation, "we sat down on the sand, and being annoyed by the vermin, left the fish we had taken, on the shore, taking with us the vermin we could not catch." Homer, on hearing this, made these verses:

> Yet from the bloods even of your-self-like sires
> Are you descended, that could make ye heirs
> To no huge hoards of coin; nor leave ye able
> To feed flocks of innumerable rabble.

Homer died at Ios of the disease he had contracted on his arrival, and not, as some authors have related, of grief at not understanding the enigma of the fisher-boys. He was buried near the shore of the island of Ios, by his companions and those citizens who had visited him during his illness. Many years after, when his poems become public, were admired by all, the inhabitants of Ios inscribed these elegiacs on his tomb: they certainly were not composed by himself:

> Here Homer the divine, in earthy bed,
> Poet of heroes, rests his sacred head.[21]

[21] H. N. Coleridge.

It may be seen from what I have said, that Homer was neither a Dorian, nor of the island of Ios, but an Æolian. This may be conjectured from the great poet only speaking of what he thinks the most admirable customs, and he would naturally suppose those of his own country to be the best. It may be judged from these verses :[22]

> Their prayers concluded, and the salt cake strewed
> Upon the victims' heads, they drew them back,
> And slew, and flayed; then cutting from the thighs
> The choicest pieces, and in double layers
> O'erspreading them with fat, above them placed
> The due meat-offerings.

The kidneys are not mentioned here, the Æolians being the only people of Greece who do not burn them. Homer also shows his Æolian descent in the following verses, there again describing the customs of that country :[23]

> Then the aged priest
> The cleft wood kindled, and libations poured
> Of ruddy wine; armed with the five-forked prongs,
> Th' attendant ministers beside him stood.

The Æolians are the only people of Greece who roast the entrails on five-barred gridirons, those of the other Greeks having but three. The Æolians also say πέμπε for πέντε, [five.]

I have now concluded that which concerns the birth, life, and death of Homer. It remains for me to determine the time in which he lived. This is most easily done in the following manner : The island of Lesbos was

[22] Iliad I. 459, II. 422. Derby's translation.
[23] Iliad I. 463. Derby's translation.

not colonized till the hundred and thirtieth year after the Trojan war, and eighteen years subsequently, Smyrna was built by the Cumæans. At this time, Homer was born. From the birth of the poet to the passage of Xerxes into Greece, six hundred and twenty-two years elapsed. The course of time may easily be calculated by a reference to the Archonships. It is thus proved that Homer was born one hundred and sixty-eight years after the taking of Troy.

BATRACHOMYOMACHIA;

OR, THE

BATTLE OF THE FROGS AND MICE.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Battle of the Frogs and Mice is a short mock-heroic poem of ancient date. The text varies in different editions, and is obviously disturbed and corrupt to a great degree. It is commonly said to have been a juvenile essay of Homer's genius; but others have attributed it to Pigres, whose reputation for humor seems to have invited the appropriation of any wandering piece of ancient wit, the author of which was uncertain. So little did the Greeks, before the era of the Ptolemies, know or care about the department of criticism which is employed in determining the genuineness of ancient writings! As to this poem being a youthful prolusion of Homer's, it seems sufficient to say that, from the beginning to the end, it is a plain and palpable parody, not only of the general spirit, but of numerous passages of the Iliad itself; and, even if no such intention to parody were discoverable in it, the objection would still remain that, to suppose a work of the mere burlesque to be the primary effort of poetry in a simple age, seems to reverse that order in the development of national taste, which the history of every other people in Europe, and of many in Asia, has almost ascertained to be a law of the human mind. It is in a state of society much more refined and permanent than that described in the Iliad,

that any popularity would attend such a ridicule of war and the gods as is contained in this poem; and the fact of there having existed three other poems[1] of the same kind, attributed, for aught we can see, with as much reason to Homer, is a strong inducement to believe that none of them were in reality of the Homeric age. Mr. Knight[2] infers, from the usage of the word δελτος as a writing tablet instead of διφθερα, or a skin, which, according to Herodotus,[3] was the material employed by the Asiatic Greeks for that purpose, that this was another offspring of Attic ingenuity; and, generally, that the familiar mention of the cock[4] is a strong argument against so ancient a date for its composition.

As to the merits of the Batrachomyomachia, although we may have some difficulty in sympathizing fully in the ingenuous declaration of Jacobus Gaddius,[5] that he thought it a more noble and perfect poem than either the Iliad or Odyssey, yet we may well allow that it is a bold, easy, and witty mock-heroic composition, and not surpassed or even rivalled by many of those which have in subsequent ages followed in its train.

The story is very short. A mouse, Psicharpax, (Crumb-snatcher,) exhausted with flying from a weasel, comes to a pool to drink; a wanton frog, Physignathus, (Puff-cheek,) having apparently never seen such a wild-fowl before, enters into conversation with him, the result of which is, that Mouse mounts upon Frog's back

[1] These were the Arachnomachia, Geranomachia, and Psaromachia; the Wars of the Spiders, the Cranes, and the Starlings.

[2] Proleg. ad Hom. [3] Terpsich. 58.

[4] V. 191. The cock is originally an Indian bird, and was introduced into Europe in the sixth century before Christ.

[5] T. i. de Script. non Ecclesiast. p. 208. Fabric., lib. ii. c. 2, s. 1.

and goes to sea. It would seem that Frog meant to be honest; but, a water-snake lifting up his head at no great distance, he is so frightened that, forgetful of his poor landsman, down he dives to the bottom. Crumb-snatcher struggles, sputters, makes a speech denouncing his perfidious betrayer to the vengeance of every feeling Mouse, and then sinks amongst the bulrushes. The deceased was son and heir of the king of the Mice, (a weasel and a gin had bereaved him of two brothers,) and his father, by his influence, induces every Mouse in the field to take arms and avenge him of the injurious Frog. The Frogs perceive the bustle, and, arming themselves, are foolish enough to leave their more proper element, and meet their assailants on dry land. Meantime, Jupiter holds a council on the subject, but at the suggestion of Minerva—who, though extremely angry with the Mice for nibbling one of her petticoats into rags, is still so incensed with the Frogs, for depriving her of sleep, that she will assist neither party—it is resolved that the gods shall be passive spectators of the contest. The battle begins: great prowess is displayed on either side; but at length the Mice get the better, and the entire race of Frogs is on the very point of extermination, when Jupiter interferes with lightning and thunder. The Mice, however, pay no attention to these hints of the divine will, and are pursuing their advantage, when Jupiter, as a last resource, orders a detachment of Crabs to make an *échelon* movement upon the victors. This manœuvre effectually checks the Mice, who, some with their tails and some with their legs bitten off, retire to their holes, and leave the remnant of the Frogs to croak dolefully over their defeat and loss.

The speech of Minerva in the council of the gods is the acme of the poet's boldness and burlesque; and it really seems to me to be so completely Aristophanic in its spirit and expressions, as to make it almost absurd to suppose it a production of the same age with the Iliad. The language of this speech savors strongly of an age in which sceptical speculations had excited a taste for a good deal of licentious raillery on the characters and habits of the popular divinities. It is precisely of a piece with what is to be found in every play of Aristophanes, and indeed, in the mention of the Frogs and their names, anticipates many of the reiterated jokes of his audacious muse. The oftener I read this pretty little poem, (and no one can read it without pleasure,) the more I seem to feel and detect its comparative modernism and truly Athenian parentage.[6]

[6] It is a curious fact that the Batrachomyomachia was the first of the supposed Homeric poems printed at the revival of letters. Laonicus of Crete was the editor of the first edition, printed at Venice in 1486, in alternate red and black lines. The Florentine edition of all the poems was two years later. Parnell's translation is neat and spirited, after the model of Pope.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

NAMES OF THE MICE.

PSICHARPAX, *one who plunders granaries.*
TROXARTES, *a bread-eater.*
LYCHOMYLE, *a licker of meal.*
PTERNOTROCTAS, *a bacon-eater.*
LICHOPINAX, *a licker of dishes.*
EMBASICHYTROS, *a creeper into pots.*
LICHENOR, *a name from licking.*
TROGLODYTES, *one who runs into holes.*
ARTOPHAGUS, *who feeds on bread.*
TYROGLYPHUS, *a cheese-scooper.*
PTERNOGLYPHUS, *a bacon-scooper.*
PTERNOPHAGUS, *a bacon-eater.*
CNISSODIOCTES, *one who follows the steam of kitchens.*
SITOPHAGUS, *an eater of wheat.*
MERIDARPAX, *one who plunders his share.*

NAMES OF THE FROGS.

PHYSIGNATHUS, *one who swells his cheeks.*
PELEUS, *a name from mud.*
HYDROMEDUSE, *a ruler in the waters.*
HYPSIBOAS, *a loud bawler.*
PELION, *from mud.*
SEUTLÆUS, *called from the beets.*
POLYPHONUS, *a great babbler.*
LIMNOCHARIS, *one who loves the lake.*
CRAMBOPHAGUS, *cabbage-eater.*
LIMNISIUS, *called from the lake.*
CALAMINTHIUS, *from the herb.*
HYDROCHARIS, *who loves the water.*
BORBOROCETES, *who lies in the mud.*
PRASSOPHAGUS, *an eater of garlic.*
PELUSIUS, *from mud.*
PELOBATES, *who walks in the dirt.*
PRASSÆUS, *called from garlic.*
CRAUGASIDES, *from croaking.*

THE

BATTLE OF THE FROGS AND MICE.

TRANSLATED BY THOMAS PARNELL.

BOOK I.

To fill my rising song with sacred fire,
Ye tuneful nine, ye sweet celestial choir!
From Helicon's imbowering height repair,
Attend my labors and reward my prayer.
The dreadful toils of raging Mars I write,
The springs of contest and the fields of fight;
How threatening mice advanced with warlike grace,
And waged dire combats with the croaking race.
Not louder tumults shook Olympus' towers,
When earth-born giants dared immortal powers.
These equal acts an equal glory claim,
And thus the Muse records the tale of fame.

Once on a time, fatigued, and out of breath,
And just escaped the stretching claws of death,
A gentle mouse, whom cats pursued in vain,
Flies swift of foot across the neighboring plain,
Hangs o'er a brink, his eager thirst to cool,
And dips his whiskers in the standing pool;

When near, a courteous frog advanced his head,
And from the waters, hoarse resounding, said,
"What art thou, stranger? what the line you boast?
What chance hath cast thee panting on our coast?
With strictest truth let all thy words agree,
Nor let me find a faithless mouse in thee.
If worthy friendship, proffered friendship take,
And ent'ring, view the pleasurable lake;
Range o'er my palace, in my bounty share,
And glad return from hospitable fare.
This silver realm extends beyond my sway,
And me, their monarch, all its frogs obey.
Great Physignathus I, from Peleus' race,
Begot in fair Hydromeduse' embrace,
Where by the nuptial bank that paints his side,
The swift Eridanus delights to glide.
Thee too, thy form, thy strength, and port proclaim
A sceptred king, a son of martial fame;
Then trace thy line, and aid my guessing eyes."
Thus ceased the frog, and thus the mouse replies:
"Known to the gods, the men, the birds that fly,
Through wild expanses of the midway sky,
My name resounds; and if unknown to thee,
The soul of great Psicharpax lives in me,
Of brave Troxartes' line, whose sleeky down
In love compressed Lichomyle the brown.
My mother she, and princess of the plains
Where'er her father Pternotroctas reigns:
Born where a cabin lifts its airy shed,
With figs, with nuts, with varied dainties fed.
But since our natures naught in common know
From what foundation can a friendship grow?

These curling waters o'er thy palace roll ;
But man's high food supports my princely soul.
In vain the circled loaves attempt to lie
Concealed in flaskets from my curious eye ;
In vain the tripe that boasts the whitest hue,
In vain the gilded bacon shuns my view,
In vain the cheeses, offspring of the pail,
Or honeyed cakes, which gods themselves regale.
And as in arts I shine, in arms I fight,
Mixed with the bravest, and unknown to flight.
Though large to mine the human form appear,
Not man himself can smite my soul with fear :
Sly to the bed with silent steps I go,
Attempt his finger or attack his toe,
And fix indented wounds with dextrous skill ;
Sleeping he feels, and only seems to feel.
Yet have we foes which direful dangers cause,
Grim owls with talons armed, and cats with claws ;
And that false trap, the den of silent fate,
Where death his ambush plants around the bait ;
All dreaded these, and dreadful o'er the rest
The potent warriors of the tabby vest :
If to the dark we fly, the dark they trace,
And rend our heroes of the nibbling race.
But me, nor stalks nor waterish herbs delight,
Nor can the crimson radish charm my sight,
The lake-resounding frogs' selected fare,
Which not a mouse of any taste can bear."
As thus the downy prince his mind expressed,
His answer thus the croaking king addressed :
" Thy words luxuriant on thy dainties rove,
And, stranger, we can boast of bounteous Jove ;

We sport in water or we dance on land,
And, born amphibious, food from both command.
But trust thyself where wonders ask thy view,
And safely tempt those seas, I'll bear thee through;
Ascend my shoulders, firmly keep thy seat,
And reach my marshy court, and feast in state."
He said, and leaned his back; with nimble bound
Leaps the light mouse, and clasps his arms around:
Then wond'ring floats, and sees with glad survey
The winding banks resembling ports at sea.
But when aloft the curling water rides,
And wets with azure wave his downy sides,
His thoughts grow conscious of approaching woe,
His idle tears with vain repentance flow,
His locks he rends, his trembling feet he rears,
Thick beats his heart with unaccustomed fears;
He sighs, and chilled with danger, longs for shore;
His tail extended forms a fruitless oar,
Half drenched in liquid death, his prayers he spake,
And thus bemoaned him from the dreadful lake:
"So passed Europa through the rapid sea,
Trembling and fainting all the venturous way;
With oary feet the bull triumphant rode,
And safe in Crete deposed his lovely load.
Ah! safe at last, may thus the frog support
My trembling limbs to reach his ample court."
As thus he sorrows, death ambiguous grows,
Lo! from the deep a water-hydra rose;
He rolls his sanguined eyes, his bosom heaves;
And darts with active rage along the waves.
Confused, the monarch sees his hissing foe,
And dives to shun the sable fates below.

Forgetful frog! the friend thy shoulders bore,
Unskilled in swimming, floats remote from shore.
He grasps with fruitless hands to find relief,
Supinely falls, and grinds his teeth with grief;
Plunging he sinks, and struggling mounts again,
And sinks and strives, but strives with fate in vain.
The weighty moisture clogs his hairy vest,
And thus the prince his dying rage expressed:
"Nor thou, that fling'st me floundering from thy back,
As from hard rocks rebounds the shattering wrack,
Nor thou shalt 'scape thy due, perfidious king!
Pursued by vengeance on the swiftest wing;
At land thy strength could never equal mine,
At sea to conquer, and by craft, was thine.
But heaven has gods, and gods have searching eyes.
Ye mice, ye mice, my great avengers rise!"
This said, he sighing gasped, and gasping died.
His death the young Lichopinax espied,
As on the flowery brink he passed the day,
Basked in the beam, and loitered life away;
Loud shrieks the mouse, his shrieks the shores repeat;
The nibbling nation learn their hero's fate;
Grief, dismal grief ensues; deep murmurs sound,
And shriller fury fills the deafened ground:
From lodge to lodge the sacred heralds run,
To fix their council with the rising sun;
Where great Troxartes crowned in glory reigns,
And winds his lengthening court beneath the plains:
Psicharpax' father, father now no more!
For poor Psicharpax lies remote from shore:
Supine he lies! the silent waters stand,
And no kind billow wafts the dead to land!

BOOK II.

WHEN rosy-fingered morn had tinged the clouds,
Around their monarch mouse the nation crowds;
Slow rose the monarch, heaved his anxious breast,
And thus the council, filled with rage, addressed:
"For lost Psicharpax much my soul endures,
'Tis mine the private grief, the public, yours.
Three warlike sons adorned my nuptial bed,
Three sons, alas! before their father dead.
Our eldest perished by the ravening cat,
As near my court the prince unheedful sat.
Our next, an engine fraught with danger drew,
The portal gaped, the bait was hung in view,
Dire arts assist the trap, the fates decoy,
And men unpitying killed my gallant boy.
The last, his country's hope, his parents' pride,
Plunged in the lake by Physignathus, died.
Rouse all the war, my friends! avenge the deed,
And bleed that monarch, and his nation bleed!"
His words in every breast inspired alarms,
And careful Mars supplied their host with arms.
In verdant hulls despoiled of all their beans,
The buskined warriors stalked along the plains.
Quills, aptly bound, their bracing corselet made,
Faced with the plunder of a cat they flayed;
The lamp's round boss affords their ample shield,
Large shells of nuts their covering helmet yield;

And o'er the region, with reflected rays,
Tall groves of needles for their lances blaze.
Dreadful in arms the marching mice appear:
The wondering frogs perceive the tumult near,
Forsake the waters, thickening form a ring,
And ask, and hearken, whence the noises spring;
When near the crowd, disclosed to public view,
The valiant chief Embasichytros drew;
The sacred herald's sceptre graced his hand,
And thus his words expressed his king's command:
"Ye frogs! the mice, with vengeance fired, advance,
And, decked in armor, shake the shining lance;
Their hapless prince by Physignathus slain,
Extends incumbent on the watery plain.
Then arm your host, the doubtful battle try;
Lead forth those frogs that have the soul to die."
The chief retires, the crowd the challenge hear,
And proudly swelling yet perplexed appear:
Much they resent, yet much their monarch blame,
Who, rising, spoke to clear his tainted fame:
"O friends! I never forced the mouse to death,
Nor saw the gaspings of his latest breath.
He, vain of youth, our art of swimming tried,
And venturous in the lake the wanton died.
To vengeance now by false appearance led,
They point their anger at my guiltless head.
But wage the rising war by deep device,
And turn its fury on the crafty mice.
Your king directs the way; my thoughts elate
With hopes of conquest form designs of fate.
Where high the banks their verdant surface heave,
And the steep sides confine the sleeping wave,

There, near the margin, and in armor bright,
Sustain the first impetuous shocks of fight:
Then where the dancing feather joins the crest,
Let each brave frog his obvious mouse arrest;
Each strongly grasping, headlong plunge a foe,
Till countless circles whirl the lake below:
Down sink the mice in yielding waters drowned;
Loud flash the waters; echoing shores resound:
The frogs triumphant tread the conquered plain,
And raise their glorious trophies of the slain."
He spake no more: his prudent scheme imparts
Redoubling ardor to the boldest hearts.
Green was the suit his arming heroes chose;
Around their legs the greaves of mallows close;
Green were the beets about their shoulders laid,
And green the colewort, which the target made;
Formed of the varied shells the waters yield,
Their glossy helmets glistened o'er the field;
And tapering sea-reeds for the polished spear,
With upright order pierced the ambient air.
Thus dressed for war, they take th' appointed height,
Poise the long arms, and urge the promised fight.
But now, where Jove's irradiate spires arise,
With stars surrounded in ethereal skies,
(A solemn council called) the brazen gates
Unbar; the gods assume their golden seats:
The sire superior leans, and points to show
What wondrous combats mortals wage below:
How strong, how large, the numerous heroes stride;
What length of lance they shake with warlike pride;
What eager fire their rapid march reveals;
So the fierce centaurs ravaged o'er the dales;

And so confirmed, the daring Titans rose,
Heaped hills on hills, and bid the gods be foes.
This seen, the power his sacred visage rears ;
He casts a pitying smile on worldly cares,
And asks what heavenly guardians take the list,
Or who the mice or who the frogs assist ?
Then thus to Pallas : " If my daughter's mind
Have joined the mice, why stays she still behind ?
Drawn forth by savory steams, they wind their way,
And sure attendance round thine altar pay,
Where, while the victims gratify their taste,
They sport to please the goddess of the feast."
Thus spake the ruler of the spacious skies ;
When thus, resolved, the blue-eyed maid replies :
" In vain, my father ! all their dangers plead ;
To such thy Pallas never grants her aid.
My flowery wreaths they petulantly spoil,
And rob my crystal lamps of feeding oil ;
(Ills following ills) but what afflicts me more,
My veil that idle race profanely tore.
The web was curious, wrought with art divine ;
Relentless wretches ! all the work was mine.
Along the loom the purple warp I spread,
Cast the light shoot and crossed the silver thread :
In this their teeth a thousand breaches tear ;
The thousand breaches skilful hands repair ;
For which vile earthly duns thy daughter grieve,
But gods, that use no coin, have none to give.
And learning's goddess never less can owe,
Neglected learning gets no wealth below.
Nor let the frogs to gain my succor sue,
Those clamorous fools have lost my favor too.

For late, when all the conflict ceased at night,
When my stretched sinews ached with eager fight,
When, spent with glorious toil, I left the field,
And sunk for slumber on my swelling shield,
Lo from the deep, repelling sweet repose,
With noisy croakings half the nation rose:
Devoid of rest, with aching brow I lay,
Till cocks proclaimed the crimson dawn of day.
Let all, like me, from either host forbear,
Nor tempt the flying furies of the spear.
Let heavenly blood (or what for blood may flow)
Adorn the conquest of a meaner foe,
Who, wildly rushing, meet the wondrous odds,
Though gods oppose, and brave the wounded gods.
O'er gilded clouds reclined, the danger view,
And be the wars of mortals scenes for you."
So moved the blue-eyed queen; her words persuade;
Great Jove assented, and the rest obeyed.

BOOK III.

Now front to front the marching armies shine,
Halt ere they meet, and form the lengthening line;
The chiefs conspicuous seen, and heard afar,
Give the loud sign to loose the rushing war;
Their dreadful trumpets deep-mouthed hornets sound,
The sounded charge remurmurs o'er the ground;
Even Jove proclaims a field of horror nigh,
And rolls low thunder through the troubled sky.
First to the fight the large Hypsiboas flew;
And brave Lichenor with a javelin slew;
The luckless warrior, filled with generous flame,
Stood foremost glittering in the post of fame.
When in his liver struck, the javelin hung,
The mouse fell thundering and the target rung;
Prone to the ground he sinks his closing eye,
And soiled in dust his lovely tresses lie.
A spear at Pelion Troglodytes cast;
The missive spear within the bosom passed;
Death's sable shades the fainting frog surround,
And life's red tide runs ebbing from the wound.
Embasichytros felt Seutlæus' dart
Transfix and quiver in his panting heart;
But great Artophagus avenged the slain,
And big Seutlæus tumbling loads the plain,
And Polyphonus dies, a frog renowned
For boastful speech, and turbulence of sound;

Deep through the belly pierced, supine he lay,
And breathed his soul against the face of day.
The strong Limnocharis, who viewed with ire
A victor triumph and a friend expire,
With heaving arms a rocky fragment caught,
And fiercely flung where Troglodytes fought,
A warrior versed in arts, of sure retreat,
Yet arts in vain elude impending fate;
Full on his sinewy neck the fragment fell,
And o'er his eyelids clouds eternal dwell.
Lichenor (second of the glorious name)
Striding advanced, and took no wand'ring aim;
Through all the frog the shining javelin flies,
And near the vanquished mouse the victor dies;
The dreadful stroke Crambophagus affrights,
Long bred to banquets, less inured to fights;
Heedless he runs, and stumbles o'er the steep,
And wildly floundering flashes up the deep;
Lichenor following, with a downward blow
Reached, in the lake, his unrecovered foe;
Gasping he rolls, a purple stream of blood
Distains the surface of the silver flood:
Through the wide wound the rushing entrails throng,
And slow the breathless carcass floats along.
Limnisius good Tyroglyphus assails,
Prince of the mice that haunt the flowery vales;
Lost to the milky fares and rural seat,
He came to perish on the bank of fate.
The dread Pternoglyphus demands the fight,
Which tender Calaminthius shuns by flight,
Drops the green target, springing quits the foe,
Glides through the lake, and safely dives below.

The dire Pternophagus divides his way
Through breaking ranks, and leads the dreadful day;
No nibbling prince excelled in fierceness more,
His parents fed him on the savage boar;
But where his lance the field with blood imbrued,
Swift as he moved Hydrocharis pursued,
Till fallen in death he lies; a shattering stone
Sounds on the neck, and crushes all the bone.
His blood pollutes the verdure of the plain,
And from his nostrils bursts the gushing brain.
Lichopinax with Borb'rocetes fights,
A blameless frog, whom humbler life delights;
The fatal javelin unrelenting flies,
And darkness seals the gentle croaker's eyes.
Incensed Prassophagus, with sprightly bound,
Bears Cnissodioctes off the rising ground,
Then drags him o'er the lake deprived of breath,
And downward plunging, sinks his soul to death.
But now the great Psicharpax shines afar,
(Scarce he so great whose loss provoked the war;)
Swift to revenge his fatal javelin fled,
And through the liver struck Pelusius dead;
His freckled corpse before the victor fell,
His soul indignant sought the shades of hell.
This saw Pelobates, and from the floo
Lifts with both hands a monstrous mass of mud;
The cloud obscene o'er all the warrior flies,
Dishonors his brown face and blots his eyes.
Enraged and wildly sputt'ring, from the shore
A stone immense of size the warrior bore,
A load for laboring earth, whose bulk to raise,
Asks ten degenerate mice of modern days;

Full to the leg arrives the crushing wound,
The frog supportless writhes upon the ground.
Thus flushed, the victor wars with matchless force,
Till loud Craugasides arrests his course;
Hoarse croaking threats precede; with fatal speed
Deep through the belly runs the pointed reed,
Then, strongly tugged, returned imbrued with gore,
And on the pile his reeking entrails bore.
The lame Sitophagus, oppressed with pain,
Creeps from the desperate dangers of the plain;
And where the ditches rising weeds supply,
To spread their lowly shades beneath the sky,
There lurks the silent mouse relieved of heat,
And, safe embowered, avoids the chance of fate.
But here Troxartes, Physignathus there,
Whirl the dire furies of the pointed spear:
Then, where the foot around its ankle plies,
Troxartes wounds, and Physignathus flies,
Halts to the pool, a safe retreat to find,
And trails a dangling length of leg behind.
The mouse still urges, still the frog retires,
And half in anguish of the flight expires;
Then pious ardor young Prassæus brings
Betwixt the fortune of contending kings:
Lank, harmless frog! with forces hardly grown,
He darts the reed in combats not his own,
Which, faintly tinkling on Troxartes' shield,
Hangs at the point, and drops upon the field.
Now nobly towering o'er the rest appears
A gallant prince that far transcends his years,
Pride of his sire, and glory of his house,
And more a Mars in combat than a mouse;

His action bold, robust his ample frame,
And Meridarpax his resounding name.
The warrior, singled from the fighting crowd,
Boasts the dire honors of his arms aloud;
Then, strutting near the lake, with looks elate,
Threats all its nations with approaching fate.
And such his strength, the silver lakes around
Might roll their waters o'er unpeopled ground.
But powerful Jove, who shows no less his grace
To frogs that perish than to human race,
Felt soft compassion rising in his soul,
And shook his sacred head, that shook the pole.
Then thus to all the gazing powers began
The sire of gods, and frogs, and mouse, and man:
"What seas of blood I view, what worlds of slain,
An Iliad rising from a day's campaign!
How fierce his javelin o'er the trembling lakes
The black-furred hero Meridarpax shakes!
Unless some favoring deity descend,
Soon will the frogs' loquacious empire end.
Let dreadful Pallas winged with pity fly,
And make her Ægis blaze before his eye:
While Mars, refulgent on his rattling car,
Arrests his raging rival of the war."
He ceased, reclining with attentive head,
When thus the glorious god of combats said,
"Nor Pallas, Jove! though Pallas take the field,
With all the terrors of her hissing shield,
Nor Mars himself, though Mars in armor bright
Ascend his car, and wheel amidst the fight;
Nor these can drive the desperate mouse afar,
And change the fortunes of the bleeding war.

Let all go forth, all heaven in arms arise,
Or launch thy own red thunder from the skies.
Such ardent bolts as flew that wondrous day,
When heaps of Titans mixed with mountains lay,
When all the giant-race enormous fell,
And huge Enceladus was hurled to hell."
'Twas thus th' armipotent advised the gods,
When from his throne the cloud-compeller nods;
Deep lengthening thunders run from pole to pole,
Olympus trembles as the thunders roll.
Then swift he whirls the brandished bolt around,
And headlong darts it at the distant ground;
The bolt, discharged, inwrapped with lightning flies,
And rends its flaming passage through the skies:
Then earth's inhabitants, the nibblers, shake,
And frogs, the dwellers in the waters, quake.
Yet still the mice advance their dread design,
And the last danger threats the croaking line:
Till Jove that inly mourned the loss they bore,
With strange assistance filled the frighted shore.
Poured from the neighboring strand, deformed to view,
They march, a sudden unexpected crew.
Strong suits of armor round their bodies close,
Which like thick anvils blunt the force of blows;
In wheeling marches turned oblique they go,
With harpy claws their limbs divide below.
Fell shears the passage to their mouth command,
From out the flesh the bones by nature stand,
Broad spread their backs, their shining shoulders rise,
Unnumbered joints distort their lengthened thighs;
With nervous cords their hands are firmly braced,
Their round black eyeballs in their bosom placed,

On eight long feet the wondrous warriors tread,
And either end alike supplies a head.
These, mortal wits to call the crabs, agree;
The gods have other names for things than we.
Now where the jointures from their loins depend,
The heroes' tails with severing grasps they rend.
Here, short of feet, deprived the power to fly,
There without hands upon the field they lie.
Wrenched from their holds, and scattered all around,
The bended lances heaped the cumbered ground.
Helpless amazement, fear pursuing fear,
And mad confusion through their host appear;
O'er the wild waste with headlong flight they go,
Or creep concealed in vaulted holes below.
But down Olympus to the western seas,
Far-shooting Phœbus drove with fainter rays,
And a whole war (so Jove ordained) begun,
Was sought, and ceased, in one revolving sun.

THE HYMNS.

THE Homeric Hymns, including the hymn to Ceres and the fragment to Bacchus which were discovered in the last century at Moscow, and edited by Ruhnken, amount to thirty-three ; but, with the exception of those to Apollo, Mercury, Venus, and Ceres, they are so short as not to consist of more than three hundred and fifty lines in all. After what I have already stated of the controversies touching the origin and genuineness of the Iliad and Odyssey, and of the probability that the Odyssey was the production of an age subsequent to that of the Iliad, it is scarcely necessary to say here that the inclination of almost all modern critics, with, I believe, the eminent exception of Hermann, is to deny that any of these hymns belong to Homer. Nevertheless it is certain that they are of high antiquity, and were commonly attributed by the ancients to Homer, with almost as much confidence as the Iliad and Odyssey. Thucydides[1] quotes a passage from the hymn to Apollo, and alleges the authority of Homer, whom he expressly takes to be the writer, to prove an historical remark ; and Diodorus Siculus,[2] Pausanias,[3] and many other ancient authors cite different verses from these hymns, and always treat them as genuine Homeric remains. On the other hand, in the life under the name of Plutarch nothing is allowed to be genuine but the

[1] Lib. iii. c. 104. [2] III. 66, IV. 2, IX. [3] II., IV.

Iliad and the Odyssey; Athenæus[4] suspects one of the Homeridæ, or Homeric rhapsodes, to be the author of the hymn to Apollo; and the scholiast to Pindar[5] testifies that one Cynæthus, a Chian rhapsode, who flourished in great reputation at Syracuse about 500 B.C., was supposed by many to be the real Homer of this particular poem. One thing, however, is certain, that these hymns are extremely ancient, and it is probable that some of them only yield to the Iliad and Odyssey in remoteness of date. They vary in character and in poetical merit; but there is scarcely one amongst them that has not something to interest us, and they have all of them, in greater or less degrees, that simple Homeric liveliness which never fails to charm us wherever we meet with it.

These hymns are easily divisible into two classes: 1. Regular poems, consisting of a prologue, an appropriate legend or fable, and an epilogue or conclusion, of which class are the hymns to Apollo, Mercury, Venus, and Ceres. 2. Mere preludes, or short preparatory addresses to, or eulogies of, the divinity at whose festival the rhapsode was present, and was about to recite some poem of greater length. All the rest of the Homeric hymns seem to be of this latter class.

[4] Lib. i. 19. [5] Nem. ii.

HYMN TO APOLLO.

THE first and longest and most celebrated of what may be called the epic or heroic hymns is that to Apollo. The lines, quoted by Thucydides, in which Homer is supposed to speak directly of himself, his blindness, and his residence in the island of Chios, have, I believe, been the chief cause of this hymn being so much better known than any of the others. They are, indeed, beautiful verses; and if none worse had ever been attributed to Homer, the prince of poets would have had little reason to complain.

The hymn to Apollo, however, is less complete, as a whole, than those to Mercury or Venus, and there is a disjointedness and want of unity discoverable in some parts, which might lead us to suspect that it is in fact a compilation of two or three separate poems. In particular, from the 178th line there seems to commence a distinct hymn in a strain materially different from that which precedes it. Not, indeed, that the pure Greek hymn, a very peculiar species of composition, is always founded on a regular plan, embracing all the attributes or all the adventures of the deity to whom it is addressed; the hymnist, more commonly, fixes upon one or two characteristic exploits, and confines himself to a detailed narrative of them only. Hence, it was no more than natural that numerous hymns should be addressed to the same god or goddess by several poets, or even by the same individual, in each of which poems, for the

most part, some new legend was introduced and some new view of the character of the divinity taken. Yet even upon this confined plan the particular subject is scarcely ever pursued uninterruptedly to the end; the narrative form, for which the poet frequently abandons that of invocation, is again as frequently broken by reiterated addresses and enumerations of titles; and thus an appearance of so many *fresh beginnings*, as it were, has been produced, which seems to have had great weight in inducing Wolf to pronounce all the Homeric hymns heterogeneous compilations from the Iliad, Odyssey, and other and distinct poems now lost. The internal evidence, however, of individual authorship in the hymns to Mercury and Venus, and in many of the others, is too much for this, and all the latter part of this hymn to Apollo is as essentially homogeneous and connected as are the verses of any poem ever written.

The first part of the hymn, concluding with the 178th line, is taken up with a description of the wanderings of Latona in search of a safe place of delivery; her agreement with the island of Delos to receive her during her labor; the birth of Apollo, and his assumption of the lyre, the bow, and the faculty of prophecy. This, in fact, seems a distinct hymn to the Delian Apollo, prefixed without much skill to another hymn to the Pythian Apollo, which commences with the 178th line, and has no other connection with the one preceding except the fundamental identity of the divinity celebrated in both pieces. The imitations of this portion of the poem, in the hymns of Callimachus to Apollo and Delos, are so close and frequent, that they would scarcely escape the charge of downright plagia-

rism in a case where modern poets were concerned. I mention this as affording some light toward an accurate estimate of the real merit of Callimachus as a poet; it is certainly surprising that so much attention should be paid to that writer, and so much of his works read in some schools, where the venerable originals, from which he copied so abundantly, and which he has rarely equalled, are scarcely even mentioned, and are never read. It is with the Homeric hymns as it is with many of the plays, and all the minor pieces, of Shakespeare; they are darkened by the excessive lustre of the sun-like poetry at their side, and are esteemed the less in proportion to the splendor of their imputed kindred.

In the second part, or rather hymn, addressed to the Pythian god, the poet relates the deceit practised by the nymph Delphusa on Apollo, in order to deter him from founding his oracle at Delphi, his detection of it, and the punishment inflicted by him; the separate conception by Juno of the monster Typhæon; the destruction of the serpent Pytho, and the building of the famous temple; and all the latter part of this hymn is occupied with a very curious and very spirited account of the manner in which Apollo lays hold of the crew of a Cretan merchant vessel, drives them to the bay of Crissa, and ultimately converts them all into priests and ministers of the new oracle.

The hymn ends with a passage that seems to contain a particle of satire and raillery in it. The captain of the Cretan vessel asks Apollo with great deference how he proposed to maintain them in his temple, situated as it was on a rock which did not admit of any manner of culture; to which pertinent inquiry Phœbus coolly

answers that they need not trouble their heads upon that subject, but take care to keep a knife in the right hand, and kill and cook the sheep and other cattle which the tribes of men would be sure to bring.

HYMN TO APOLLO.

TRANSLATED BY GEORGE CHAPMAN.

I.

TO THE DELIAN APOLLO.

I WILL remember, and express the praise
Of heaven's far-darter, the fair king of days;
Whom even the gods themselves fear when he goes
Through Jove's high house; and when his goodly bows
He goes to bend, all from their thrones arise,
And cluster near, t' admire his faculties.
Only Latona stirs not from her seat
Close by the Thunderer, till her son's retreat
From his dread archery; but then she goes,
Slackens his string, and shuts his quiver close;
And (having taken to her hand, his bow,
From off his able shoulders) doth bestow
Upon a pin of gold the glorious tiller;
The pin of gold fixed in his father's pillar.
Then doth she to his throne his state uphold,
Where his great father, in a cup of gold,
Serves him with nectar; and shows all, the grace
Of his great son. Then th' other gods take place;
His gracious mother glorying to bear
So great an archer, and a son so clear.

All hail, O blest Latona! to bring forth
An issue of such all-out-shining worth,
Royal Apollo, and the queen that loves
The hurls of darts. She in th' Ortygian groves,
And he, in cliffy Delos, leaning on
The lofty Oros; and being built upon
By Cynthus prominent: that his head rears
Close to the palm, that Inops fluent cheers.
How shall I praise thee, far being worthiest praise?
O Phœbus! to whose worth the law of lays
In all kinds is ascribed. If feeding flocks
By continent or isle, all eminen'st rocks
Did sing for joy; hill-tops, and floods in song
Did break their billows, as they flowed along
To serve the sea. The shores, the seas, and all
Did sing as soon as from the lap did fall
Of blest Latona, thee the joy of man,
(Her child-bed made the mountain Cynthian
In rocky Delos, the sea-circled isle,
On whose all sides the black seas break their pile,)
And overflowed for joy, so frank a gale
The singing winds did on their waves exhale.
Here born, all mortals live in thy commands;
Whoever Crete holds; Athens; or the strands
Of th' isle Ægina; or the famous land
For ships, Eubœa, or Eresia;
Or Peparethus, bord'ring on the sea.
Ægas, or Athos, that doth Thrace divide
And Macedon. Or Pelion, with the pride
Of his high forehead. Or the Samian isle,
That likewise lies near Thrace; or Scyrus' soil;
Ida's steep tops. Or all that Phocis fill;

Or Autocanes, with the heaven-high hill ;
Or populous Imber ; Lemnos without ports ;
Or Lesbos, fit for the divine resorts ;
And sacred soil of blest Æolion.
Or Chius that exceeds comparison
For fruitfulness ; with all the isles that lie
Embraced with seas. Mimas, with rocks so high,
Or lofty-crowned Corycius, or the bright
Charos ; or Æsagæus' dazzling height ;
Or watery Samos. Mycale, that bears
Her brows even with the circles of the spheres.
Miletus, Cous, that the city is
Of voice-divided-choice humanities :
High Cnidus ; Carpathus, still struck with wind ;
Naxus, and Paros ; and the rocky-mined
Rugged Rhenæa. Yet through all these parts,
Latona, great-grown with the king of darts,
Travailed ; and tried if any would become
To her dear birth an hospitable home.
All which extremely trembled, (shook with fear,)
Nor durst endure so high a birth to bear
In their free states ; though for it, they became
Never so fruitful, till the reverend dame
Ascended Delos ; and her soil did seize
With these winged words : " O Delos ! wouldst thou
please
To be my son Apollo's native seat,
And build a wealthy fane to one so great ;
No one shall blame or question thy kind deed.
Nor think I, thou dost sheep or oxen feed
In any such store, or in vines exceed ;
Nor bring'st forth such innumerable plants,

Which often make the rich inhabitants
Careless of Deity: if thou then shouldst rear
A fane to Phœbus, all men would confer
Whole hecatombs of beeves for sacrifice,
Still thronging hither. And to thee would rise
Ever unmeasured odors, shouldst thou long
Nourish thy king thus, and from foreign wrong
The gods would guard thee; which thine own address
Can never compass for thy barrenness."
She said, and Delos joyed; replying thus:
"Most happy sister of Saturnius!
I gladly would with all means entertain
The king your son; being now despised of men;
But should be honored with the greatest then.
Yet this I fear, nor will conceal from thee;
Your son, some say, will author misery
In many kinds, as being to sustain
A mighty empire over gods and men,
Upon the holy-gift-giver the earth;
And bitterly I fear that when his birth
Gives him the sight of my so barren soil
He will contemn, and give me up to spoil;
Enforce the sea to me, that ever will
Oppress my heart with many a wat'ry hill.
And therefore let him choose some other land
Where he shall please, to build at his command
Temple and grove, set thick with many a tree.
For wretched polypusses breed in me
Retiring chambers; and black sea-calves den
In my poor soil, for penury of men.
And yet, O goddess! wouldst thou please to swear
The gods' great oath to me, before thou bear

Thy blessed son here; that thou wilt erect
A fane to him, to render the effect
Of men's demands to them before they fall;
Then will thy son's renown be general;
Men will his name in such variety call,
And I shall then be glad his birth to bear."
This said, the gods' great oath she thus did swear:
"Know this, O earth! broad heaven's inferior sphere,
And of black Styx the most infernal lake,
(Which is the gravest oath the gods can take,)
That here shall ever rise to Phœbus' name
An odorous fane and altar; and thy fame
Honor, past all isles else, shall see employed."
Her oath thus took, and ended, Delos joyed
In mighty measure, that she should become
To far-shot Phœbus' birth the famous home.
Latona then nine days and nights did fall
In hopeless labor, at whose birth were all
Heaven's most supreme and worthy goddesses;
Dione, Rhæa, and th' exploratress
Themis; and Amphitrite, that will be
Pursued with sighs still: every deity,
Except the snowy-wristed wife of Jove,
Who held her moods aloft, and would not move.
Only Lucina, to whose virtue vows
Each childbirth patient, heard not of her throes;
But sat, by Juno's counsel, on the brows
Of broad Olympus, wrapped in clouds of gold:
Whom Jove's proud wife in envy did withhold,
Because bright-locked Latona was to bear
A son so faultless; and in force so clear.
The rest Thaumantia sent before to bring

Lucina to release the envied king:
Assuring her that they would straight confer
A carcanet, nine cubits long, on her,
All woven with wires of gold: but charged her then,
To call, apart from th' ivory-wristed queen,
The childbirth-guiding goddess; for just fear
Lest, her charge uttered in Saturnia's ear,
She, after, might dissuade her from descent.
When wind-swift-footed Iris knew th' intent
Of th' other goddesses, away she went;
And instantly she passed the infinite space
'Twixt earth and heaven, when, coming to the place
Where dwelt the immortals, straight without the gate
She got Lucina; and did all relate
The goddesses commanded; and inclined
To all that they demanded, her dear mind.
And on their way they went, like those two doves
That, walking highways, every shadow moves
Up from the earth; forced with their natural fear.
When, entering Delos, she that is so dear
To dames in labor, made Latona straight
Prone to delivery: and to yield the weight
Of her dear burden, with a world of ease.
When, with her fair hand, she a palm did seize,
And, staying her by it, stuck her tender knees
Amidst the soft mead; that did smile beneath
Her sacred labor, and the child did breathe
The air in th' instant. All the goddesses
Break in kind tears, and shrieks for her quick ease;
And thee, O archer Phœbus! with waves clear
Washed sweetly over, swaddled with sincere
And spotless swathbands; and made then to flow,

About thy breast, a mantle, white as snow;
Fine, and new made; and cast a veil of gold
Over thy forehead. Nor yet forth did hold
Thy mother for thy food, her golden breast:
But Themis, in supply of it, addressed
Lovely Ambrosia; and drank off to thee
A bowl of nectar, interchangeably
With her immortal fingers serving thine.
And when, O Phœbus! that eternal wine
Thy taste had relished, and that food divine;
No golden swathband longer could contain
Thy panting bosom: all that would constrain
Thy soon-eased godhead, every feeble chain
Of earthy child-rights, flew in sunder, all.
And then didst thou thus to the deities call:
"Let there be given me my loved lute and bow;
I'll prophesy to men; and make them know
Jove's perfect counsels." This said, up did fly,
From broad-wayed earth, the unshorn deity,
Far-shot Apollo. All th' immortals stood
In steep amaze to see Latona's brood.
All Delos, looking on him, all with gold
Was loaden straight; and joyed to be extolled
By great Latona so, that she decreed
Her barrenness should bear the fruitful'st seed
Of all the isles and continents of earth;
And loved her, from her heart so, for her birth.
For so she flourished, as a hill that stood
Crowned with the flower of an abundant wood.
And thou, O Phœbus! bearing in thy hand
Thy silver bow, walk'st over every land;
Sometimes ascend'st the rough-hewn rocky hill

Of desolate Cynthus, and sometimes tak'st will
To visit islands, and the plumps of men.
And many a temple, all ways, men ordain
To thy bright godhead; groves, made dark with trees,
And never shorn, to hide ye deities.
All high-loved prospects, all the steepest brows
Of far-seen hills; and every flood that flows
Forth to the sea, are dedicate to thee.
But most of all, thy mind's alacrity
Is raised with Delos; since to fill thy fane
There flocks so many an Ionian,
With ample gowns, that flow down to their feet;
With all their children; and the reverend sweet
Of all their pious wives. And these are they
That (mindful of thee) even thy deity
Render more sprightly, with their champion fight,
Dances, and songs, performed to glorious sight;
Once having published and proclaimed their strife.
And these are acted with such exquisite life
That one would say, "Now, the Ionian strains
Are turned immortals; nor know what age means;"
His mind would take such pleasure from his eye,
To see them served by all mortality;
Their men so humane; women so well graced;
Their ships so swift; their riches so increased,
Since thy observance. Who (being all before
Thy opposites) were all despised and poor.
And to all these, this absolute wonder add,
Whose praise shall render all posterities glad:
The Delian virgins are thy handmaids, all;
And, since they served Apollo, jointly fall
Before Latona, and Diana too

In sacred service ; and do therefore know
How to make mention of the ancient trimms
Of men and women in their well-made hymns,
And soften barbarous nations with their songs,
Being able all to speak the several tongues
Of foreign nations, and to imitate
Their musics there, with art so fortunate,
That one would say, there every one did speak ;
And all their tunes in natural accents break,
Their songs so well composed are, and their art
To answer all sounds, is of such desert.
But come, Latona, and thou king of flames,
With Phœbe, rect'ress of chaste thoughts in dames,
Let me salute ye, and your graces call
Hereafter to my just memorial.
And you, O Delian virgins ! do me grace,
When any stranger of our earthy race,
Whose restless life affliction hath in chase,
Shall hither come and question you ; who is
To your chaste ears of choicest faculties
In sacred poesy, and with most right
Is author of your absolut'st delight ;
Ye shall yourselves do all the right ye can
To answer for our name : " The sightless man
Of stony Chios, all whose poems shall
In all last ages stand for capital." [6]

[6] "Virgins ! farewell—and oh ! remember me
Hereafter, when some stranger from the sea
A hapless wanderer may your isle explore,
And ask you, maids, of all the bards you boast,
Who sings the sweetest and delights you most—
Oh ! answer all—'A blind old man and poor—
Sweetest he sings—and dwells on Chios' rocky shore !'"
H. N. COLERIDGE.

This for your own sakes I desire; for I
Will propagate mine own precedency,
As far as earth shall well-built cities bear,
Or human conversation is held dear;
Not with my praise direct, but praises due;
And men shall credit it, because 'tis true.
However, I'll not cease the praise I vow
To far-shot Phœbus with the silver bow
Whom lovely-haired Latona gave the light.

II.

TO THE PYTHIAN APOLLO.

O KING! both Lycia is in rule thy right;
Fair Mæonie, and the maritimal
Miletus, wished to be the seat of all.
  But chiefly Delos, girt with billows round,
Thy most respected empire doth resound.
Where thou to Pythos went'st, to answer there,
As soon as thou wert born, the burning ear
Of many a far-come, to hear future deeds;
Clad in divine and odoriferous weeds.
And with thy golden fescue playedst upon
Thy hollow harp; that sounds to heaven set gone.
  Then to Olympus, swift as thought he flew
To Jove's high house; and had a retinue
Of gods to attend him. And then straight did fall
To study of the harp, and harpsical,
All th' immortals. To whom every muse
With ravishing voices did their answer use,
Singing the eternal deeds of Deity.
And from their hands what hells of misery
Poor Humans suffer, living desperate quite;
And not an art they have, wit, or deceit,
Can make them manage any act aright;
Nor find with all the soul they can engage,
A salve for death, or remedy for age.
  But here, the fair-haired Graces, the wise Hours,

Harmonia, Hebe, and sweet Venus' powers,
Danced ; and each other, palm to palm, did cling.
And with these danced not a deformed thing ;
No forspoke[7] dwarf, nor downward witherling ;
But all with wond'rous goodly forms were decked,
And moved with beauties of unprized aspect.
Dart-dear Diana, even with Phœbus bred,
Danced likewise there ; and Mars a march did tread,
With that brave bevy. In whose consort fell
Argicides, th' ingenious sentinel.
Phœbus-Apollo touched his lute to them
Sweetly and softly ; a most glorious beam
Casting about him, as he danced and played.
And even his feet were all with rays arrayed.
His weed and all of a most curious trim,
With no less lustre graced and circled him.
By these Latona, with a hair that shined
Like burnished gold ; and (with the mighty mind)
Heaven's counsellor, Jove, sat with delightsome eyes
To see their son new ranked with deities.
How shall I praise thee then, that art all praise ?
Amongst the brides shall I thy deity raise ?
Or being in love, when sad thou went'st to woo
The virgin Aza ? and didst overthrow
The even-with-god's Elation's mighty seed,
That had of goodly horse so brave a breed ;
And Phorbas, son of sovereign Triopus ;
Valiant Leucippus, and Erectheus,
And Triopus himself with equal fall ;
Thou but on foot, and they on horseback all.

[7] *Forbidden ;* so deformed as to be repelled by other men from their society.

Or shall I sing thee, as thou first didst grace
Earth with thy foot, to find thee forth a place
Fit to pronounce thy oracles to men?
First from Olympus thou alightedst then
Into Pieria; passing all the land
Of fruitless Lesbos, choked with drifts of sand.
The Magnets likewise, and the Perrhabes,
And to Iolcus variedst thy access,
Cenæus' tops ascending; that their base
Make bright Eubœa, being of ships the grace;
And fixed thy fair stand in Lelantus' field;
That did not yet thy mind's contentment yield
To raise a fane on, and a sacred grove.
Passing Eurypus then, thou mad'st remove
Up to earth's ever-green and holiest hill.
Yet swiftly, thence too, thou transcendest still
To Mycalessus, and didst touch upon
Teumessus, apt to make green couches on,
And flowery field-beds. Then thy progress found
Thebes out, whose soil with only woods was crowned;
For yet was sacred Thebes no human seat,
And therefore were no paths nor highways beat
On her free bosom, that flows now with wheat;
But then, she only wore on it a wood.
From hence (even loth to part, because it stood
Fit for thy service) thou putt'st on remove
To green Onchestus, Neptune's glorious grove;
Where new-tamed horse bred, nourish nerves so rare,
That still they frolic, though they travailed are
Never so sore; and hurry after them
Most heavy coaches; but are so extreme
(In usual travail) fiery and free,

That though their coachman ne'er so masterly
Govern their courages, he sometimes must
Forsake his seat, and give their spirits their lust;
When, after them, their empty coach they draw,
Foaming and neighing, quite exempt from awe.
And if their coachman guide through any grove
Unshorn, and vowed to any deity's love,
The lords encoached, leap out, and all their care
Use to allay their fires, with speaking fair;
Stroking and trimming them: and in some queach,
Or strength of shade, within their nearest reach,
Reining them up, invoke the deified king
Of that unshorn and everlasting spring;
And leave them then to her preserving hands,
Who is the fate that there the god commands.
And this was first the sacred fashion there.
From hence thou went'st (O thou in shafts past peer!)
And found'st Cephissus, with thy all-seeing beams,
Whose flood affects so many silver streams;
And from Lylæus pours so bright a wave;
Yet forth thy foot flew, and thy fair eyes gave
The view of Ocale, the rich in towers;
Then to Amartus, that abounds in flowers;
Then to Delphusa putt'st thy progress on,
Whose blessed soil naught harmful breeds upon;
And there thy pleasure would a fane adorn,
And nourish woods, whose shades should ne'er be shorn,
Where, this thou told'st her, standing to her close,
"Delphusa, here I entertain suppose
To build a far-famed temple, and ordain
An oracle t' inform the minds of men;

Who shall forever offer to my love
Whole hecatombs ; even all the men that move
In rich Peloponnesus, and all those
Of Europe, and the isles the seas inclose,
Whom future search of acts and beings brings ;
To whom I'll prophesy the truths of things
In that rich temple where my oracle sings."
  This said, the all-bounds-reacher, with his bow
The fane's divine foundations did foreshow ;
Ample they were, and did huge length impart,
With a continuate tenor, full of art.
But when Delphusa looked into his end,
Her heart grew angry, and did thus extend
Itself to Phœbus : " Phœbus, since thy mind
A far-famed fane hath in itself designed,
To bear an oracle to men in me,
That hecatombs may put in fire to thee ;
This let me tell thee, and impose for stay
Upon thy purpose ; th' inarticulate neigh
Of fire-hoofed horse will ever disobey
Thy numerous ear ; and mules will for their drink
Trouble my sacred springs, and I should think
That any of the human race had rather
See here the hurries of rich coaches gather,
And hear the haughty neighs of swift-hoofed horse,
Than, in his pleasure's place, convert recourse
T' a mighty temple ; and his wealth bestow
On pieties, where his sports may freely flow,
Or see huge wealth that he shall never owe.
And therefore, wouldst thou hear my free advice,
Though mightier far thou art, and much more wise,
O king ! than I ; thy power being great'st of all

In Crissa, underneath the bosom's fall
Of steep Parnassus, let thy mind be given
To set thee up a fane, where never driven
Shall glorious coaches be, nor horses' neighs
Storm near thy well-built altars ; but thy praise
Let the fair race of pious Humans bring
Into thy fane, that Io-pæans sing.
And those gifts only let thy deified mind
Be circularly pleased with, being the kind
And fair burnt-offerings that true deities bind."
With this his mind she altered, though she spake
Not for his good, but her own glory's sake.
From hence, O Phœbus! first thou mad'st retreat,
And of the Phlegians reached'st the walled seat,
Inhabited with contumelious men ;
Who, slighting Jove, took up their dwellings then
Within a large cave, near Cephyssus' lake.
Hence, swiftly moving, thou all speed didst make
Up to the tops intended ; and the ground
Of Crissa, under the-with-snow-still-crowned
Parnassus reached'st, whose face affects the west ;
Above which hangs a rock that still seems pressed
To fall upon it ; through whose breast doth run
A rocky cave, near which the king the sun
Cast to contrive a temple to his mind :
And said, " Now here stands my conceit inclined
To build a famous fane, where still shall be
An oracle to men ; that still to me
Shall offer absolute hecatombs, as well
Those that in rich Peloponnesus dwell,
As those of Europe, and the isles that lie
Walled with the sea ; that all their pains apply

T' employ my counsels. To all which will I
True secrets tell by way of prophecy,
In my rich temple that shall ever be
An oracle to all posterity."
This said, the fane's form he did straight present,
Ample, and of a length of great extent;
In which Trophonius and Agamede,
Who of Erginus were the famous seed,
Imposed the stony entry: and the heart
Of every god had for their excellent art.
About the temple dwelt of human name
Unnumbered nations, it acquired such fame
Being all of stone, built for eternal date;
And near it did a fountain propagate
A fair stream far away, when Jove's bright seed,
(The king Apollo,) with an arrow, freed
From his strong string, destroyed the dragoness
That wonder[8] nourished; being of such excess
In size and horridness of monstrous shape,
That on the forced earth she wrought many a rape;
Many a spoil made on it; many an ill
On crook-haunched herds brought, being impurpled still
With blood of all sorts: having undergone
The charge of Juno, with the golden throne,
To nourish Typhon, the abhorred affright
And bane of mortals. Whom into the light
Saturnia brought forth, being incensed with Jove,
Because the most renowned fruit of his love
Pallas he got, and shook out of his brain:
For which majestic Juno did complain
In this kind to the blest court of the skies:

[8] The fountain.

" Know, all ye sex-distinguished deities,
That Jove, assembler of the cloudy throng,
Begins with me first, and affects with wrong
My right in him, made by himself his wife,
That knows and does the honored marriage life
All honest offices ; and yet hath he
Unduly got, without my company,
Blue-eyed Minerva ; who of all the sky
Of blest immortals is the absolute grace ;
Where I have brought into the heavenly race
A son, both taken in his feet and head,
So ugly, and so far from worth my bed,
That ravished into hand, I took and threw
Down to the vast sea his detested view :
Where Nereus' daughter, Thetis, who her way
With silver feet makes, and the fair array
Of her bright sisters, saved, and took to guard.
But, would to heaven, another yet were spared,
The like grace of his godhead. Crafty mate,
What other 'scape canst thou excogitate ?
How could thy heart sustain to get alone
The gray-eyed goddess ? Her conception,
Nor bringing forth, had any hand of mine ;
And yet know all the gods, I go for thine
To such kind uses. But I'll now employ
My brain to procreate a masculine joy,
That 'mongst th' immortals may as eminent shine ;
With shame affecting nor my bed nor thine ;
Nor will I ever touch at thine again,
But far fly it and thee ; and yet will reign
Amongst th' immortals ever." This spleen spent,
(Still yet left angry,) far away she went

From all the deathless, and yet prayed to all ;
Advanced her hand, and ere she let it fall
Used these excitements : " Hear me now, O earth !
Broad heaven above it, and beneath your birth
The deified Titanors, that dwell about
Vast Tartarus, from whence sprung all the rout
Of men and deities : hear me all, I say,
With all your forces, and give instant way
To a son of mine, without Jove ; who yet may
Nothing inferior prove in force to him,
But past him spring as far in able limb
As he past Saturn." This pronounced, she struck
Life-bearing earth so strongly that she shook
Beneath her numbed hand ; which when she beheld,
Her bosom with abundant comforts swelled,
In hope all should to her desire extend.
From hence the year, that all such proofs gives end
Grew round, yet all that time the bed of Jove
She never touched at ; never was her love
Enflamed to sit near his Dedalian throne,
As she accustomed, to consult upon
Counsels kept dark, with many a secret skill ;
But kept her vow-frequented temple still,
Pleased with her sacrifice, till now, the nights
And days accomplished, and the year's whole rights
In all her revolutions being expired,
The hours, and all, run out, that were required
To vent a birth-right, she brought forth a son,
Like gods or men, in no condition,
But a most dreadful and pernicious thing
Called Typhon, who on all the human spring
Conferred confusion ; which, received to hand

By Juno, instantly she gave command
(Ill to ill adding) that the dragoness
Should bring it up: who took, and did oppress
With many a misery, to maintain th' excess
Of that inhuman monster, all the race
Of men, that were of all the world the grace;
Till the far-working Phœbus at her sent
A fiery arrow, that invoked event
Of death gave to her execrable life.
Before which yet she lay in bitter strife,
With dying pains, grovelling on earth, and drew
Extreme short respirations, for which flew
A shout about the air, whence, no man knew,
But came by power divine. And then she lay
Tumbling her trunk, and winding every way
About her nasty nest; quite leaving then
Her murderous life, embrued with deaths of men.
  Then Phœbus gloried, saying, "Thyself now lie
On men-sustaining earth, and putrefy;
Who first of putrefaction wast informed.
Now on thy life have death's cold vapors stormed,
That storm'dst on men, the earth-fed, so much death,
In envy of the offspring they made breathe
Their lives out on my altars; now from thee
Not Typhon shall enforce the misery
Of merited death; nor she, whose name implies
Such scathe, (Chimæra,) but black earth make prize,
To putrefaction, thy immanities.
And bright Hyperion, that light all eyes shows,
Thine with a night of rottenness shall close."
  Thus spake he, glorying, and then seized upon
Her horrid heap with putrefaction

Hyperion's lovely powers ; from whence her name
Took sound of Python, and heaven's sovereign flame
Was surnamed Pythius ; since the sharp-eyed sun
Affected so, with putrefaction,
The hellish monster. And now Phœbus' mind
Gave him to know, that falsehood had struck blind
Even his bright eye, because it could not find
The subtle fountain's fraud ; to whom he flew,
Enflamed with anger, and in th' instant drew
Close to Delphusa, using this short vow :
" Delphusa ! you must look no longer now
To vent your frauds on me, for well I know
Your situation to be lovely, worth
A temple's imposition, it pours forth
So delicate a stream. But your renown
Shall now no longer shine here, but mine own."
This said, he thrust her promontory down,
And dammed her fountain up with mighty stones ;
A temple giving consecrations
In woods adjoining. And in this fane all
On him, by surname of Delphusius call ;
Because Delphusa's sacred flood and fame
His wrath affected so, and hid in shame.
And then thought Phœbus, what descent of men
To be his ministers, he should retain,
To do in stony Pythos sacrifice.
To which his mind contending, his quick eyes
He cast upon the blue sea, and beheld
A ship, on whose masts sails that winged it swelled :
In which were men transferred, many and good
That in Minoian Gnossus eat their food,
And were Cretensians ; who now are those

That all the sacrificing dues dispose,
And all the laws deliver to a word
Of day's great king, that wears the golden sword.
And oracles (out of his Delphian tree
That shrouds her fair arms in the cavity
Beneath Parnassus' mount) pronounce to men.
These, now his priests, that lived as merchants then,
In traffics and pecuniary rates,
For sandy Pylos and the Pylean states,
Were under sail. But now encountered them
Phœbus Apollo, who into the stream
Cast himself headlong: and the strange disguise
Took of a dolphin of a goodly size,
Like which he leaped into their ship, and lay
As an ostent of infinite dismay.
For none with any strife of mind could look
Into the omen. All the ship-masts shook;
And silent all sat, with the fear they took;
Armed not, nor struck they sail, but as before
Went on with full trim; and a foreright blore[9]
Stiff, and from forth the south, the ship made fly;
When first they stripped the Maline promont'ry,
Touched at Laconia's soil; in which a town
Their ship arrived at, that the sea doth crown,
Called Tænarus, a place of much delight
To men that serve heaven's comforter of sight,
In which are fed the famous flocks that bear
The wealthy fleeces; on a delicate lair
Being fed and seated: where the merchants fain
Would have put in, that they might out again
To tell the miracle that chanced to them,

[9] "Blast" or "gale."

And try if it would take the sacred stream,
Rushing far forth, that he again might bear
Those other fishes, that abounded there,
Delightsome company; or still would stay
Aboard their dry ship. But it failed t' obey,
And for the rich Peloponnesian shore
Steered her free sail; Apollo made the blore
Directly guide it: that, obeying still
Reached dry Arena, and, what wish doth fill,
Fair Aryphæa, and the populous height
Of Thryus, whose stream, siding her, doth weight
With safe pass on Alphæus; Pylos sands
And Pylian dwellers, keeping by the strands
On which th' inhabitants of Crunius dwell;
And Helida, set opposite to hell.
Chalcis and Dymes reached, and happily
Made sail by Pheras; all being overjoyed
With that frank gale, that Jove himself employed.
And then amongst the clouds they might descry
The hill, that far-seen Ithaca calls her eye;
Dulichius, Samos, and, with timber graced,
Shady Zacynthus. But when now they past
Peloponnesus all; and then, when showed
The infinite vale of Crissa, that doth shroud
All rich Moræa with her liberal breast,
So frank a gale there flew out of the west,
As all the sky discovered; 'twas so great,
And blew so from the very council seat
Of Jove himself, that quickly it might send
The ship through full seas to her journey's end.
From thence they sailed, quite opposite, to the east,
And to the region where Light leaves his rest.

The Light himself being sacred pilot there,
And made the sea-trod ship arrive them near
The grateful Crissa, where he rest doth take
Close to her port and sands. And then forth brake
The far-shot king, like to a star that strows
His glorious forehead, where the mid-day glows,
That all in sparkles did his state attire,
Whose lustre leaped up to the sphere of fire;
He trod where no way oped, and pierced the place
That of his sacred tripods held the grace,
In which he lighted such a fluent flame
As gilt all Crissa; in which every dame,
And dame's fair daughter, cast out vehement cries
At those fell fires of Phœbus' prodigies,
That shaking fears through all their fancies threw.
Then, like the mind's swift light, again he flew
Back to the ship, shaped like a youth in height
Of all his graces; shoulders broad, and straight,
And all his hair in golden curl enwrapped,
And to the merchants thus his speech he shaped:
"Ho, strangers! what are you? and from what seat
Sail ye these ways, that salt and water sweat?
To traffic justly? or use vagrant 'scapès
Void of all rule? conferring wrongs and rapes,
Like pirates, on the men ye never saw?
With minds project, exempt from list or law?
Why sit ye here so stupefied? nor take
Land while ye may? nor deposition make
Of naval arms? When this the fashion is
Of men industrious, who (their faculties
Wearied at sea) leave ship, and use the land
For food, that with their healths and stomachs stand."

This said, with bold minds he their breast supplied,
And thus made answer the Cretensian guide:
"Stranger! because you seem to us no seed
Of any mortal, but celestial breed,
For parts and person; joy your steps ensue,
And gods make good the bliss we think your due.
Vouchsafe us true relation, on what land
We here arrive, and what men here command.
We were for well-known parts bound; and from Crete
(Our vaunted country) to the Pylian seat
Vowed our whole voyage. Yet arrive we here,
Quite cross to those wills that our motions steer,
Wishing to make return some other way;
Some other course desirous to assay,
To pay our lost pains. But some god hath filled
Our frustrate sails, defeating what we willed."
Apollo answered: "Strangers! though before
Ye dwelt in woody Gnossus, yet no more
Ye must be made your own reciprocals
To your loved city, and fair severals
Of wives and houses. But ye shall have here
My wealthy temple, honored far and near
Of many a nation; for myself am son
To Jove himself, and of Apollo[10] won
The glorious title, who thus safely through
The sea's vast billow still have held your plough:
No ill intending, that will let ye make
My temple here your own, and honors take
Upon yourselves, all that to me are given.
And more, the counsels of the king of heaven

[10] From ἀπόλλυμι, "to destroy," because he destroyed the serpent Python.

Yourselves shall know, and with his will receive
Ever the honors that all men shall give.
Do as I say then instantly, strike sail,
Take down your tackling, and your vessel hale
Up into land ; your goods bring forth and all
The instruments that into sailing fall ;
Make on this shore an altar : fire enflame,
And barley-white cakes offer to my name.
And then, environing the altar, pray,
And call me (as ye saw me in the day
When from the windy seas I brake swift way
Into your ship) Delphinius, since I took
A dolphin's form then. And to every look
That there shall seek it, that my altar shall
Be made a Delphian memorial
From thence, forever. After this, ascend
Your swift black ship and sup, and then intend
Ingenuous offering to the equal gods
That in celestial seats make blest abodes.
When, having stayed your healthful hunger's sting,
Come all with me, and Io-pæans sing
All the way's length, till you attain the state
Where I your opulent fane have consecrate."
To this they gave him passing diligent ear ;
And vowed to his obedience all they were.
First striking sail, their tacklings then they loosed,
And (with their gables stooped) their mast imposed
Into the mast-room. Forth themselves then went,
And from the sea into the continent
Drew up their ship ; which far up from the sand
They raised with ample rafters. Then in hand
They took the altar, and informed it on

The seas near shore ; imposing thereupon
White cakes of barley : fire made, and did stand
About it round, as Phœbus gave command,
Submitting invocations to his will :
Then sacrificed to all the heavenly hill
Of powerful godheads. After which they eat
Aboard their ship, till with fit food replete
They rose ; nor to their temple used delay ;
Whom Phœbus ushered, and touched all the way
His heavenly lute, with art above admired,
Gracefully leading them. When all were fired
With zeal to him, and followed wond'ring all
To Pythos ; and upon his name did call
With Io-pæans, such as Cretans use.
And in their bosoms did the deified muse
Voices of honey-harmony infuse.
With never-weary feet their way they went,
And made, with all alacrity, ascent
Up to Parnassus ; and that longed-for place
Where they should live, and be of men the grace.
When, all the way, Apollo showed them still
Their far-stretched valleys, and their two-topped hill,
Their famous fane, and all that all could raise
To a supreme height of their joy and praise.
And then the Cretan captain thus inquired
Of king Apollo : " Since you have retired,
O sovereign ! our sad lives so far from friends
And native soil, (because so far extends
Your dear mind's pleasure,) tell us how we shall
Live in your service. To which question call
Our provident minds, because we see not crowned
This soil with store of vines, nor doth abound

In wealthy meadows, on which we may live,
As well as on men our attendance give."
He smiled, and said, "O men! that nothing know,
And so are followed with a world of woe;
That needs will succor care, and curious moan,
And pour out sighs, without cessation,
Were all the riches of the earth your own!
Without much business, I will render known
To your simplicities an easy way
To wealth enough; let every man purvey
A skean, or slaught'ring steel, and his right hand,
Bravely bestowing, evermore see manned
With killing sheep, that to my fane will flow
From all far nations. On all which bestow
Good observation, and all else they give
To me, make you your own all, and so live.
For all which watch before my temple well,
And all my counsels, above all, conceal.
"If any give vain language, or to deeds,
Yea, or as far as injury proceeds,
Know that, at losers' hands, for those that gain,
It is the law of mortals to sustain.
Besides, ye shall have princes to obey,
Which still ye must, and (so ye gain) ye may."
All now is said: give all thy memories stay.
And thus to thee (Jove and Latona's son)
Be given all grace of salutation.
Both thee and others of th' immortal state
My song shall memorize to endless date.

HYMN TO MERCURY.

THE Hymn to Mercury is one of the most diverting poems in the Greek literature. It is preëminently humorous in the best sense of the word, and, therefore, essentially different from the wit and comic license of Aristophanes. The hymn is perfectly regular and connected throughout, and tells the whole story of Mercury's famous felony on the oxen of Apollo, the altercation of the two gods, their reference to Jupiter, and final compromise. That it should be honorable to a deity to be celebrated for such thieving and such ineffable lying as Mercury here plays off against the sagacious and truth-loving Apollo, is a very curious characteristic of the popular religion of the Greeks; and, indeed, the matter is so managed by the poet that most readers get more fond of this little born rogue than of any other of the ancient dwellers on Olympus. In this hymn Hermes is gifted with the character of a perfect Spanish Picaro, a sort of Lazarillo de Tormes amongst the gods, stealing their goods, playing them tricks, and telling such enormous, such immortal lies to screen himself from detection, that certainly no human thief could ever have the vanity to think of rivalling them on earth.[1]

[1] Sir Joshua Reynolds's admirable picture of "Mercury as a thief" is a complete embodying of the spirit of this hymn.

HYMN TO MERCURY

TRANSLATED BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

SING, Muse, the son of Maia and of Jove,
The Herald-child, king of Arcadia
And all its pastoral hills, whom in sweet love
Having been interwoven, modest May
Bore heaven's dread Supreme: an antique grove
Shadowed the cavern where the lovers lay
In the deep night, unseen by gods or men,
And white-armed Juno slumbered sweetly then.

Now, when the joy of Jove had its fulfilling,
And heaven's tenth moon chronicled her relief,
She gave to light a babe all babes excelling,
A schemer subtle beyond all belief;
A shepherd of thin dreams, a cow-stealing,
A night-watching, and door-waylaying thief,
Who 'mongst the gods was soon about to thieve
And other glorious actions to achieve.

The babe was born at the first peep of day;
He began playing on the lyre at noon,
And the same evening did he steal away
Apollo's herds; the fourth day of the moon

On which him bore the venerable May,
From her immortal limbs he leaped full soon,
Nor long could in the sacred cradle keep,
But out to seek Apollo's herds would creep.

Out of the lofty cavern wandering,
He found a tortoise, and cried out, "A treasure!"
(For Mercury first made the tortoise sing.)
The beast before the portal at his leisure
The flowery herbage was depasturing,
Moving his feet in a deliberate measure
Over the turf. Jove's profitable son
Eyeing him laughed, and laughing thus begun:

"A useful god-send are you to me now,
King of the dance, companion of the feast,
Lovely in all your nature! Welcome, you
Excellent plaything! Where, sweet mountain beast,
Got you that speckled shell? Thus much I know,
You must come home with me and be my guest;
You will give joy to me, and I will do
All that is in my power to honor you.

"Better to be at home than out of door—
So come with me; and though it has been said
That you alive defend from magic power,
I know you will sing sweetly when you're dead."
Thus having spoken, the quaint infant bore,
Lifting it from the grass on which it fed,
And grasping it in his delighted hold,
His treasured prize into the cavern old.

Then scooping with a chisel of grey steel,
He bored the life and soul out of the beast ·
Not swifter a swift thought of woe or weal
Darts through the tumult of a human breast
Which thronging cares annoy—not swifter wheel
The flashes of its torture and unrest
Out of the dizzy eyes—than Maia's son
All that he did devise hath featly done.

And through the tortoise's hard, strong skin
At proper distances small holes he made,
And fastened the cut stems of reeds within,
And with a piece of leather overlaid
The open space and fixed the cubits in,
Fitting the bridge to both, and stretched o'er all
Symphonious cords of sheep gut rhythmical.

When he had wrought the lovely instrument,
He tried the chords, and made division meet
Preluding with the plectrum, and there went
Up from beneath his hand a tumult sweet
Of mighty sounds, and from his lips he sent
A strain of unpremeditated wit
Joyous and wild and wanton—such you may
Hear among revellers on a holiday.

He sung how Jove and May of the bright sandal
Dallied in love not quite legitimate ;
And his own birth, still scoffing at the scandal,
And naming his own name, did celebrate ;

His mother's cave and servant maids he planned all
In plastic verse, her household stuff and state,
Perennial pot, trippet, and brazen pan—
But singing he conceived another plan.

Seized with a sudden fancy for fresh meat,
He in his sacred crib deposited
The hollow lyre, and from the cavern sweet
Rushed with great leaps up to the mountain's head,
Revolving in his mind some subtle feat
Of thievish craft, such as a swindler might
Devise in the lone season of dun night.

Lo! the great sun under the ocean's bed has
Driven steeds and chariot—the child meanwhile strode
O'er the Pierian mountains clothed in shadows,
Where the immortal oxen of the god
Are pastured in the flowering unmown meadows,
And safely stalled in a remote abode—
The archer Argicide, elate and proud,
Drove fifty from the herd, lowing aloud.

He drove them wandering o'er the sandy way
But, being ever mindful of his craft,
Backward and forward drove he them astray,
So that the tracks which seemed before, were aft.
His sandals then he threw to the ocean spray,
And for each foot he wrought a kind of raft
Of tamarisk, and tamarisk-like sprigs,
And bound them in a lump with withy twigs.

And on his feet he tied these sandals light,
The trail of whose wide leaves might not betray
His track; and then, a self-sufficing wight,
Like a man hastening on some distant way,
He from Piera's mountain bent his flight;
But an old man perceived the infant pass
Down green Onchestus heaped like beds with grass.

The old man stood dressing his sunny vine:
"Halloo! old fellow with the crooked shoulder!
You grub those stumps? before they will bear wine,
Methinks even you must grow a little older:
Attend, I pray, to this advice of mine,
As you would 'scape what might appall a bolder—
Seeing, see not—and hearing, hear not—and—
If you have understanding—understand."

So saying, Hermes roused the oxen vast;
O'er shadowy mountain and resounding dell,
And flower-paven plains, great Hermes past;
Till the black night divine, which favouring fell
Around his steps, grew gray, and morning fast
Wakened the world to work, and from her cell
Sea-strewn, the Pallantean Moon sublime
Into her watch-tower just began to climb.

Now to Alpheus he had driven all
The broad-foreheaded oxen of the Sun;
They came unwearied to the lofty stall
And to the water-trough which ever run

Through the fresh fields—and when with rushgrass tall,
Lotus and all sweet herbage, every one
Had pastured been, the great god made them move
Toward the stall in a collected grove.

A mighty pile of wood the god then heaped,
And having soon conceived the mystery
Of fire, from two smooth laurel branches stript
The bark, and rubbed them in his palms—on high
Suddenly forth the burning vapor leapt,
And the divine child saw delightedly—
Mercury first found out, for human weal,
Tinder-box, matches, fire-irons, flint and steel.

And fine dry logs and roots innumerous
He gathered in a delve upon the ground—
And kindled them—and instantaneous
The strength of the fierce flame was breathed around:
And whilst the might of glorious Vulcan thus
Wrapt the great pile with glare and roaring sound,
Hermes dragged forth two heifers, lowing loud,
Close to the fire—such might was in the god.

And on the earth upon their backs he threw
The panting beasts, and rolled them o'er and o'er,
And bored their lives out. Without more ado
He cut up fat and flesh, and down before
The fire, on spits of wood he placed the two,
Toasting their flesh and ribs, and all the gore
Pursed in their bowels; and while this was done
He stretched their hides over a craggy stone.

We mortals let an ox grow old, and then
  Cut it up after long consideration—
But joyous-minded Hermes from the glen
  Drew the fat spoils to the more open station
Of a flat, smooth space, and portioned them; and when
  He had by lot assigned to each a ration
Of the twelve gods, his mind became aware
Of all the joys which in religion are.

For the sweet savor of the roasted meat
  Tempted him, though immortal. Nathelesse,
He checked his haughty will and did not eat,
  Though what it cost him words can scarce express,
And every wish to put such morsels sweet
  Down his most sacred throat, he did repress;
But soon within the lofty portalled stall
He placed the fat and flesh and bones and all.

And every trace of the fresh butchery
  And cooking, the god soon made disappear,
As if it all had vanished through the sky;
  He burned the hoofs and horns and head and hair,
The insentiate fire devoured them hungrily;
  And when he saw that every thing was clear,
He quenched the coals and trampled the black dust,
And in the stream his bloody sandals tossed.

All night he worked in the serene moonshine—
  But when the light of day was spread abroad,
He sought his natal mountain peaks divine.
  On his long wandering, neither man nor god

Had met him, since he killed Apollo's kine,
Nor house-dog had barked at him on his road;
Now he obliquely through the key-hole past,
Like a thin mist or an autumnal blast.

Right through the temple of the spacious cave
He went with soft, light feet—as if his tread
Fell not on earth; no sound their falling gave:
Then to his cradle he crept quick, and spread
The swaddling-clothes about him; and the knave
Lay playing with the covering of the bed,
With his left hand about his knees—the right
Held his beloved tortoise lyre tight.

There he lay innocent as a new-born child,
As gossips say; but though he was a god,
The goddess, his fair mother, unbeguiled,
Knew all that he had done being abroad:
"Whence come you, and from what adventure wild,
You cunning rogue, and where have you abode
All the long night, clothed in your impudence?
What have you done since you departed hence?

"Apollo soon will pass within this gate
And bind your tender body in a chain
Inextricably tight, and fast as fate,
Unless you can delude the god again,
Even when within his arms: ah runagate!
A pretty torment both for gods and men
Your father made when he made you." "Dear mother,"
Replied sly Hermes, "wherefore scold and bother?

"As if I were like other babes of old,
And understood nothing of what is what,
And cared at all to hear my mother scold.
I in my subtle brain a scheme have got,
Which whilst the sacred stars round heaven are rolled
Will profit you and me; nor shall our lot
Be as you counsel, without gifts or food,
To spend our lives in this obscure abode.

"But we will leave this shadow-peopled cave,
And live among the gods, and pass each day
In high communion, sharing what they have
Of profuse wealth and unexhausted prey;
And from the portion which my father gave
To Phœbus, I will snatch my share away,
Which if my father will not—nathelesse I,
Who am the king of robbers, can but try.

"And, if Latona's son should find me out,
I'll countermine him by a deeper plan;
I'll pierce the Pythian temple walls, though stout,
And sack the fane of every thing I can—
Cauldrons and tripods of great worth, no doubt,
Each golden cup and polished brazen pan,
All the wrought tapestries and garments gay."
So they together talked: meanwhile the Day

Æthereal born arose out of the flood
Of flowing ocean, bearing light to men.
Apollo passed toward the sacred wood,
Which from the inmost depths of its green glen

Echoes the voice of Neptune—and there stood
On the same spot in green Onchestus then
That same old animal, the vine-dresser,
Who was employed hedging his vineyard there.

Latona's glorious son began: "I pray,
Tell, ancient hedger of Onchestus green,
Whether a drove of kine has passed this way,
All heifers with crooked horns? for they have been
Stolen from the herd in high Pieria,
Where a black bull was fed apart, between
Two woody mountains in a neighboring glen,
And four fierce dogs watched there, unanimous as men.

"And, what is strange, the author of this theft
Has stolen the fatted heifers every one;
But the four dogs and the black bull are left:
Stolen they were last night at set of sun,
Of their soft beds and their sweet food bereft:
Now tell me, man born ere the world begun,
Have you seen any one pass with the cows?"
To whom the man of overhanging brows:

"My friend, it would require no common skill
Justly to speak of every thing I see:
On various purposes of good or ill
Many pass by my vineyard—and to me
'Tis difficult to know the invisible
Thoughts which in all those many minds may be:
Thus much alone I certainly can say,
I tilled these vines till the decline of day.

"And then I thought I saw, but dare not speak
With certainty of such a wonderous thing,
A child, who could not have been born a week,
Those fair-horned cattle closely following,
And in his hand he held a polished stick:
And, as on purpose, he walked wavering
From one side to the other of the road,
And with his face opposed the steps he trod."

Apollo hearing this, passed quickly on—
No wingèd omen could have shown more clear
That the deceiver was his father's son.
So the god wraps a purple atmosphere
Around his shoulders, and like fire is gone
To famous Pylos, seeking his kine there,
And found their track and his, yet hardly cold,
And cried, "What wonder do mine eyes behold!

"Here are the footsteps of the hornèd herd
Turned back toward their fields of asphodel;
But these! are not the tracks of beast or bird,
Gray wolf, or bear, or lion of the dell,
Or maned Centaur—sand was never stirred
By man or woman thus! Inexplicable!
Who with unwearied feet could e'er impress
The sand with such enormous vestiges?

"That was most strange—but this is stranger still!"
Thus having said, Phœbus impetuously
Sought high Cyllene's forest-cinctured hill,
And the deep cavern where dark shadows lie,

And where the ambrosial nymph with happy will
Bore the Saturnian's love-child, Mercury—
And a delightful odor from the dew
Of the hill pastures, at his coming, flew.

And Phœbus stooped under the craggy roof
Arched over the dark cavern. Maia's child
Perceived that he came angry, far aloof,
About the cows of which he had been beguiled,
And over him the fine and fragrant woof
Of his ambrosial swaddling clothes he piled—
As among fire-brands lies a burning spark
Covered, beneath the ashes cold and dark.

There, like an infant who had sucked his fill
And now was newly washed and put to bed,
Awake, but courting sleep with weary will,
And gathered in a lump hands, feet, and head,
He lay, and his beloved tortoise still
He grasped and held under his shoulder-blade.
Phœbus the lovely mountain-goddess knew,
Not less her subtle, swindling baby, who

Lay swathed in his sly wiles. Round every crook
Of the ample tavern, for his kine, Apollo
Looked sharp; and when he saw them not, he took
The glittering key, and opened three great hollow
Recesses in the rock—where many a nook
Was filled with the sweet food immortals swallow,
And mighty heaps of silver and of gold
Were piled within—a wonder to behold!

And white and silver robes, all overwrought
With cunning workmanship of tracery sweet—
Except among the gods there can be naught
In the wide world to be compared with it.
Latona's offspring, after having sought
His herds in every corner, thus did greet
Great Hermes: "Little cradled rogue, declare
Of my illustrious heifers, where they are?

"Speak quickly! or a quarrel between us
Must rise, and the event will be that I
Shall haul you into dismal Tartarus,
In fiery gloom to dwell eternally;
Nor shall your father nor your mother loose
The bars of that black dungeon—utterly
You shall be cast out from the light of day,
To rule the ghosts of men, unblest as they."

To whom thus Hermes slily answered: "Son
Of great Latona, what a speech is this!
Why come you here to ask me what is done
With the wild oxen which it seems you miss?
I have not seen them, nor from any one
Have heard a word of the whole business;
If you should promise an immense reward,
I could not tell more than you now have heard.

"An ox-stealer should be both tall and strong,
And I am but a little new-born thing,
Who, yet at least, can think of nothing wrong:
My business is to suck, and sleep, and fling

The cradle-clothes about me all day long—
Or, half-asleep, hear my sweet mother sing,
And to be washed in water clean and warm,
And hushed and kissed and kept secure from harm.

"Oh! let not e'er this quarrel be averred.
The astounded gods would laugh at you, if e'er
You should allege a story so absurd,
As that a new-born infant forth could fare
Out of his home after a savage herd.
I was born yesterday—my small feet are
Too tender for the roads so hard and rough:
And if you think that this is not enough,

"I swear a great oath, by my father's head,
That I stole not your cows, and that I know
Of no one else who might, or could, or did.
Whatever things cows are, I do not know,
For I have only heard the name."—This said,
He winked as fast as could be, and his brow
Was wrinkled, and a whistle loud gave he,
Like one who hears some strange absurdity.

Apollo gently smiled and said, "Ay, ay,
You cunning little rascal, you will bore
Many a rich man's house, and your array
Of thieves will lay their siege before his door,
Silent as night, in night; and many a day
In the wild glens rough shepherds will deplore
That you or yours, having an appetite,
Met with their cattle, comrade of the night!

"And this among the gods shall be your gift,
To be considered as the lord of those
Who swindle, house-break, sheep-steal, and shop-lift.
But now if you would not your last sleep doze,
Crawl out!" Thus saying, Phœbus did uplift
The subtle infant in his swaddling-clothes,
And in his arms, according to his wont,
A scheme devised the illustrious Argiphont.

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And sneezed and shuddered—Phœbus on the grass
Him threw, and whilst all that he had designed
He did perform—eager although to pass,
Apollo darted from his mighty mind
Toward the subtle babe the following scoff:
"Do not imagine this will get you off,

"You little swaddled child of Jove and May!"
And seized him: "By this omen I shall trace
My noble herds, and you shall lead the way."
Cyllenian Hermes from the grassy place,
Like one in earnest haste to get away,
Rose, and with hands lifted toward his face,
Roused both his ears, up from his shoulders drew
His swaddling-clothes, and—"What do you mean to do

[2] Apollo catches the boy in his arms; the boy behaves in a sort of way that makes it as difficult for Apollo to hold him, as for me to describe the adventure.—H. N. COLERIDGE.

"With me, you unkind god?" said Mercury;
"Is it about these cows you tease me so?
I wish the race of cows were perished. I
Stole not your cows—I do not even know
What things cows are. Alas! I well may sigh,
That since I came into this world of woe,
I should have ever heard the name of one.
But I appeal to the Saturnian's throne."

Thus Phœbus and the vagrant Mercury
Talked without coming to an explanation,
With adverse purpose. As for Phœbus, he
Sought not revenge, but only information,
And Hermes tried with lies and roguery
To cheat Apollo; but when no evasion
Served—for the cunning one his match had found—
He paced on first over the sandy ground.

He of the silver bow, the child of Jove,
Followed behind, till to their heavenly sire
Came both his children—beautiful as Love,
And from his equal balance did require
A judgment in the cause wherein they strove.
O'er odorous Olympus and its snows
A murmuring tumult as they came arose.

And from the folded depths of the great hill,
While Hermes and Apollo reverent stood
Before Jove's throne, the indestructible
Immortals rushed in mighty multitude;

And whilst their seats in order due they fill,
The lofty thunderer in a careless mood
To Phœbus said: "Whence drive you this sweet prey,
This herald-baby, born but yesterday?

"A most important subject, trifler, this
To lay before the gods!" "Nay, father, nay,
When you have understood the business,
Say not that I alone am fond of prey.
I found this little boy in a recess
Under Cyllene's mountains far away—
A manifest and most apparent thief,
A scandal-monger beyond all belief.

"I never saw his like either in heaven
Or upon earth for knavery and craft;
Out of the field my cattle yester-even,
By the low shore on which the loud sea laughed,
He right down to the river ford had driven:
And mere astonishment would make you daft
To see the double kind of footsteps strange
He has impressed wherever he did range.

"The cattle's track on the black dust full well
Is evident, as if they went towards
The place from which they came—that asphodel
Meadow, in which I feed my many herds—
His steps were most incomprehensible—
I know not how I can describe in words
Those tracks—he could have gone along the sands
Neither upon his feet nor on his hands.

"He must have some other stranger mode
Of moving on; those vestiges immense,
Far as I traced them on the sandy road,
Seemed like the trail of oak-toppings; but thence
No mark or track denoting where they trod
The hard ground gave; but, working at his fence,
A mortal hedger saw him as he past
To Pylos, with the cows, in fiery haste.

"I found that in the dark he quietly
Had sacrificed some cows, and before light
Had thrown the ashes all dispersedly
About the road—then, still as gloomy night,
He crept into his cradle, either eye
Rubbing, and cogitating some new sleight.
No eagle could have seen him as he lay
Hid in his cavern from the peering day.

"I taxed him with the fact, when he averred
Most solemnly that he did neither see
Or even had in any manner heard
Of my lost cows, whatever things cows be;
Nor could he tell, though offered a reward,
Not even who could tell of them to me."
So speaking, Phœbus sate; and Hermes then
Addressed the supreme lord of gods and men:

"Great father, you know clearly beforehand,
That all which I shall say to you is soothe;
I am a most veracious person, and
Totally unacquainted with untruth.

At sunrise, Phœbus came, but with no band
Of gods to bear him witness, in great wrath
To my abode, seeking his heifers there,
And saying that I must show him where they are,

"Or he would hurl me down the dark abyss.
I know that every Apollonian limb
Is clothed with speed and might and manliness,
As a green bank with flowers; but unlike him,
I was born yesterday, and you may guess
He well knew this when he indulged the whim
Of bullying a poor little new-born thing,
That slept, and never thought of cow-driving.

"Am I like a strong fellow who steals kine?
Believe me, dearest father, such you are,
This driving of the herds is none of mine;
Across my threshold did I wander ne'er,
So may I thrive! I reverence the divine
Sun and the gods, and I love you, and care
Even for this hard accuser—who must know
I am as innocent as they or you.

"I swear by these most gloriously-wrought portals,
(It is, you will allow, an oath of might,)
Through which the multitude of the immortals
Pass and repass forever, day and night,
Devising schemes for the affairs of mortals—
That I am guiltless; and I will requite,
Although mine enemy be great and strong,
His cruel threat—do thou defend the young!"

So speaking, the Cyllenian Argiphont
Winked, as if now his adversary was fitted;
And Jupiter, according to his wont,
Laughed heartily to hear the subtle-witted
Infant give such a plausible account,
And every word a lie. But he remitted
Judgment at present—and his exhortation
Was, to compose the affair by arbitration.

And they by mighty Jupiter were bidden
To go forth with a single purpose both,
Neither the other chiding nor yet chidden;
And Mercury with innocence and truth
To lead the way, and show where he had hidden
The mighty heifers. Hermes, nothing loth,
Obeyed the Ægis-bearer's will—for he
Is able to persuade all easily.

These lovely children of heaven's highest lord
Hastened to Pylos and the pastures wide
And lofty stalls by the Alphean ford,
Where wealth in the mute night is multiplied
With silent growth. Whilst Hermes drove the herd
Out of the stony cavern, Phœbus spied
The hides of those the little babe had slain,
Stretched on the precipice above the plain.

"How was it possible," then Phœbus said,
"That you, a little child, born yesterday,
A thing on mother's milk and kisses fed,
Could two prodigious heifers ever flay?

Even I myself may well hereafter dread
Your prowess, offspring of Cyllenian May,
When you grow strong and tall." He spoke, and bound
Stiff withy bands the infant's wrists around.

He might as well have bound the oxen wild;
The withy bands, though starkly interknit,
Fell at the feet of the immortal child,
Loosened by some device of his quick wit.
Phœbus perceived himself again beguiled,
And stared—while Hermes sought some hole or pit,
Looking askance and winking fast as thought,
Where he might hide himself and not be caught.

Sudden he changed his plan, and with strange skill
Subdued the strong Latonian, by the might
Of winning music, to his mightier will;
His left hand held the lyre, and in his right
The plectrum struck the chords—unconquerable
Up from beneath his hand in circling flight
The gathering music rose—and sweet as Love,
The penetrating notes did live and move

Within the heart of great Apollo—he
Listened with all his soul, and laughed for pleasure.
Close to his side stood harping fearlessly
The unabashed boy; and to the measure
Of the sweet lyre, there followed loud and free
His joyous voice; for he unlocked the treasure
Of his deep song, illustrating the birth
Of the bright gods, and the dark desert earth;

And how to the immortals every one
A portion was assigned of all that is;
But chief Mnemosyne did Maia's son
Clothe in the light of his loud melodies;
And as each god was born or had begun
He in their order due and fit degrees
Sung of his birth and being—and did move
Apollo to unutterable love.

These words were winged with his swift delight:
"You heifer-stealing schemer, well do you
Deserve that fifty oxen should requite
Such minstrelsies as I have heard even now.
Comrade of feasts, little contriving wight,
One of your secrets I would gladly know,
Whether the glorious power you now show forth
Was folded up within you at your birth;

"Or whether mortal taught or god inspired
The power of unpremeditated song?
Many divinest sounds have I admired,
The Olympian gods and mortal men among;
But such a strain of wondrous, strange, untired,
And soul-awakening music, sweet and strong,
Yet did I never hear except from thee,
Offspring of May, impostor Mercury!

"What Muse, what skill, what unimagined use,
What exercise of subtlest art, has given
Thy songs such power?—for those who hear may choose
From three, the choicest of the gifts of heaven,

Delight, and love, and sleep—sweet sleep, whose dews
  Are sweeter than the balmy tears of even:
And I, who speak this praise, am that Apollo
Whom the Olympian muses ever follow:

"And their delight is dance, and the blithe noise
  Of song and overflowing poesy;
And sweet, even as desire, the liquid voice
  Of pipes, that fills the clear air thrillingly;
But never did my inmost soul rejoice
  In this dear work of youthful revelry,
As now I wonder at thee, son of Jove;
Thy harpings and thy song are soft as love.

"Now since thou hast, although so very small,
  Science of arts so glorious, thus I swear,
And let this cornel javelin, keen and tall,
  Witness between us what I promise here,
That I will lead thee to the Olympian hall,
  Honored and mighty, with thy mother dear,
And many glorious gifts in joy will give thee,
And even at the end will ne'er deceive thee."

To whom thus Mercury, with prudent speech:
  "Wisely hast thou inquired of my skill:
I envy thee no thing I know to teach
  Even this day: for both in word and will
I would be gentle with thee; thou canst reach
  All things in thy wise spirit, and thy sill
Is highest in heaven among the sons of Jove,
Who loves thee in the fulness of his love.

"The Counsellor Supreme has given to thee
Divinest gifts, out of the amplitude
Of his profuse exhaustless treasury;
By thee, 'tis said, the depths are understood
Of his far voice; by thee the mystery
Of all oracular fates—and the dread mood
Of the diviner is breathed up; even I—
A child—perceive thy might and majesty:

"Thou canst seek out and compass all that wit
Can find or teach: yet since thou wilt, come take
The lyre—be mine the glory giving it—
Strike the sweet chords, and sing aloud, and wake
Thy joyous pleasure out of many a fit
Of tranced sound—and with fleet fingers make
Thy liquid-voiced comrade talk with thee—
It can talk measured music eloquently.

"Then bear it boldly to the revel loud,
Love-wakening dance, or feast of solemn state,
A joy by night or day—for those endowed
With art and wisdom who interrogate
It teaches, babbling in delightful mood
All things which make the spirit most elate,
Soothing the mind with sweet familiar play,
Chasing the heavy shadows of dismay.

"To those who are unskilled in its sweet tongue,
Though they should question most impetuously
Its hidden soul, it gossips something wrong—
Some senseless and impertinent reply.

But thou who art as wise as thou art strong,
Can compass all that thou desirest. I
Present thee with this music-flowing shell,
Knowing thou canst interrogate it well.

"And let us two henceforth together feed
On this green mountain slope and pastoral plain,
The herds in litigation—they will breed
Quickly enough to recompense our pain,
If to the bulls and cows we take good heed;
And thou, though somewhat over fond of gain,
Grudge me not half the profit."—Having spoke,
The shell he proffered, and Apollo took,

And gave him in return the glittering lash,
Installing him as herdsman: from the look
Of Mercury then laughed a joyous flash.
And then Apollo with the plectrum strook
The chords, and from beneath his hands a crash
Of mighty sounds rushed up, whose music shook
The soul with sweetness; as of an adept
His sweeter voice a just accordance kept.

The herd went wandering o'er the divine mead,
While these most beautiful sons of Jupiter
Won their swift way up the snowy head
Of white Olympus, with the joyous lyre
Soothing their journey; and their father dread
Gathered them both into familiar
Affection sweet: and then, and now, and ever,
Hermes must love him of the golden quiver,

To whom he gave the lyre that sweetly sounded,
Which skilfully he held and played thereon.
He piped the while, and far and wide rebounded
The echo of his pipings; every one
Of the Olympians sat with joy astounded,
While he conceived another piece of fun,
One of his old tricks—which the god of day
Perceiving, said, "I fear thee, son of May;

"I fear thee and thy sly chameleon spirit,
Lest thou should steal my lyre and crooked bow;
This glory and power thou dost from Jove inherit,
To teach all craft upon the earth below;
Thieves love and worship thee—it is thy merit
To make all mortal business ebb and flow
By roguery: now, Hermes, if you dare,
By sacred Styx a mighty oath to swear

"That you will never rob me, you will do
A thing extremely pleasing to my heart."
Then Mercury sware by the Stygian dew,
That he would never steal his bow or dart,
Or lay his hands on what to him was due,
Or ever would employ his powerful art
Against his Pythian fane. Then Phœbus swore
There was no god or man whom he loved more.

"And I will give thee as a good-will token,
The beautiful wand of wealth and happiness;
A perfect three-leaved rod of gold unbroken,
Whose magic will thy footsteps ever bless;

And whatsoever by Jove's voice is spoken
Of earthly or divine from its recess,
It like a loving soul to thee will speak,
And more than this, do thou forbear to seek.

" For, dearest child, the divinations high
Which thou requirest, 'tis unlawful ever
That thou, or any other deity,
Should understand—and vain were the endeavor;
For they are hidden in Jove's mind, and I
In trust of them, have sworn that I would never
Betray the counsels of Jove's inmost will
To any god—the oath was terrible.

" Then, golden-wanded brother, ask me not
To speak the fates by Jupiter designed;
But be it mine to tell their various lot
To the unnumbered tribes of human kind.
Let good to these, and ill to those be wrought
As I dispense—but he who comes consigned
By voice and wings of perfect augury
To my great shrine, shall find avail in me.

" Him will I not deceive, but will assist;
But he who comes relying on such birds
As chatter vainly, who would strain and twist
The purpose of the gods with idle words,
And deems their knowledge light, he shall have missed
His road—whilst I among my other hoards
His gifts deposit. Yet, O son of May!
I have another wondrous thing to say.

"There are three Fates, three virgin Sisters, who
Rejoicing in their wind-outspeeding wings,
Their heads with flour snowed over white and new,
Sit in a vale round which Parnassus flings
Its circling skirts: from these I have learned true
Vaticinations of remotest things.
My father cared not. Whilst they search out dooms,
They sit apart and feed on honeycombs.

"They, having eaten the fresh honey, grow
Drunk with divine enthusiasm, and utter
With earnest willingness the truth they know;
But if deprived of that sweet food, they mutter
All plausible delusions: these to you
I give: if you inquire, they will not stutter:
Delight your own soul with them: any man
You would instruct, may profit, if he can.

"Take these and the fierce oxen, Maia's child—
O'er many a horse and toil-enduring mule,
O'er jagged-jawed lions, and the wild
White-tusked boars, o'er all, by field or pool,
Of cattle which the mighty mother mild
Nourishes in her bosom, thou shalt rule;
Thou dost alone the veil of death uplift—
Thou givest not—yet this is a great gift.

Thus king Apollo loved the child of May
In truth, and Jove covered them with love and joy.
Hermes with gods and men even from that day
Mingled, and wrought the latter much annoy,

And little profit, going far astray
Through the dun night. Farewell, delightful Boy
Of Jove and Maia sprung! never by me,
Nor thou, nor other songs shall unremembered be.

HYMN TO VENUS.

By far the most beautiful of the Homeric hymns—indeed, for its length equal in beauty to any part of the Homeric poems—is the Hymn to Venus. No poet ever surpassed the richness and elegance, the warmth and delicacy, the dignity and tenderness, of this exquisite composition. It has always seemed to me to be conceived in an older and more Homeric spirit than any of the other hymns; and it is remarkable for being founded entirely on the loves of Venus and Anchises, and for containing a repetition of the prophecy of the Iliad, that Æneas and his posterity should reign over Troy. It is indeed quite Trojan in its subject and sentiments, and there is one passage[1] in it by which we learn that the Phrygians spoke a language entirely different from the Trojan, and by which we may infer that the Trojans, as has often been conjectured, were Greeks in speech and blood, as they certainly were in religion.

In no Greek or Latin classical poem, that I remember, is Venus represented with such consummate dignity, tenderness, and passion as in this hymn; and in this particular it certainly differs a good deal from the more popular conception of the goddess of love in the Iliad. Difficult as the story was to tell, it is told with unbroken decorum, and constitutes a striking example of that instinctive propriety of manner and words, in the display of which the Greek poets set all others at defiance.

[1] V. 113–114.

HYMN TO VENUS.

TRANSLATED BY WILLIAM CONGREVE.

SING, Muse! the force and all-informing fire
Of Cyprian Venus, goddess of desire;
Her charms th' immortal minds of gods can move,
And tame the stubborn race of men to love:
The wilder herds and ravenous beasts of prey
Her influence feel, and own her kindly sway:
Through pathless air and boundless ocean's space
She rules the feathered kind and finny race:
Whole Nature on her sole support depends,
And far as life exists her care extends.
Of all the num'rous host of gods above,
But three are found inflexible to love:
Blue-eyed Minerva free preserves her heart,
A virgin unbeguiled by Cupid's art;
In shining arms the martial maid delights,
O'er war presides, and well-disputed fights;
With thirst of fame she first the hero fired,
And first the skill of useful arts inspired;
Taught artists first the carving-tool to wield,
Chariots with brass to arm, and form the fenceful shield:

She first taught modest maids in early bloom
To shun the lazy life, and spin or ply the loom.
  Diana next the Paphian queen defies,
Her smiling arts and proffered friendship flies;
She loves with well-mouthed hounds and cheerful horn,
Or silver-sounding voice, to wake the Morn,
To draw the bow, or dart the pointed spear,
To wound the mountain boar, or rouse the woodland deer;
Sometimes of gloomy groves she likes the shades,
And there of virgin-nymphs the chorus leads;
And sometimes seeks the town, and leaves the plains,
And loves society where Virtue reigns.
  The third celestial power averse to love
Is Virgin Vesta, dear to mighty Jove,
Whom Neptune sought to wed, and Phœbus wooed,
And both with fruitless labor long pursued;
For she, severely chaste, rejected both,
And bound her purpose with a solemn oath,
A virgin life inviolate to lead;
She swore, and Jove assenting bowed his head.
But since her rigid choice the joys denied
Of nuptial rites, and blessings of a bride,
The bounteous Jove with gifts that want supplied.
High on a throne she sits amidst the skies,
And first is fed with fumes of sacrifice;
For holy rites to Vesta first are paid,
And on her altar first-fruit off'rings laid;
So Jove ordained in honor of the maid.
  These are the powers above, and only these,
Whom love and Cytherea's arts displease:
Of other beings none in earth or skies

Her force resists or influence denies.
With ease her charms the Thunderer can bind,
And captivate with love th' almighty Mind:
Even he, whose dread commands the gods obey,
Submits to her, and owns superior sway;
Enslaved to mortal beauties by her power,
He oft descends his creatures to adore;
While to conceal the theft from Juno's eyes,
Some well-dissembled shape the god belies;
Juno, his wife and sister, both in place
And beauty first among th' ethereal race,
Whom all transcending in superior worth
Wise Saturn got, and Cybele brought forth,
And Jove, by never-erring counsel swayed,
The partner of his bed and empire made.
But Jove at length, with just resentment fired,
The laughing queen herself with love inspired;
Swift through her veins the sweet contagion ran,
And kindled in her breast desire of mortal man,
That she, like other deities, might prove
The pains and pleasures of inferior love,
And not insultingly the gods deride,
Whose sons were human by the mother's side:
Thus Jove ordained she now for man should burn,
And bring forth mortal offspring in her turn.
Amongst the springs which flow from Ida's head,
His lowing herds the young Anchises fed,
Whose godlike form and face the smiling queen
Beheld, and loved to madness soon as seen.
To Cyprus straight the wounded goddess flies,
Where Paphian temples in her honor rise,
And altars smoke with daily sacrifice.

Soon as arrived she to her shrine repaired,
Where ent'ring quick, the shining gates she barred.
The ready Graces wait, her baths prepare,
And oint with fragrant oils her flowing hair;
Her flowing hair around her shoulders spreads,
And all adown ambrosial odor sheds:
Last in transparent robes her limbs they fold,
Enriched with ornaments of purest gold;
And thus attired her chariot she ascends,
And Cyprus left, her flight to Troy she bends.
On Ida she alights, then seeks the seat,
Which loved Anchises chose for his retreat;
And ever as she walked through lawn or wood,
Promiscuous herds of beasts admiring stood.
Some humbly follow, while some fawning meet,
And lick the ground, and crouch beneath her feet:
Dogs, lions, wolves, and bears, their eyes unite,
And the swift panther stops to gaze with fixed delight:
For every glance she gives soft fire imparts,
Enkindling sweet desire in savage hearts.
Inflamed with love all single out their mates,
And to their shady dens each pair retreats.
Meantime the tent she spies so much desired,
Where her Anchises was alone retired,
Withdrawn from all his friends and fellow-swains,
Who fed their flocks beneath, and sought the plains;
In pleasing solitude the youth she found,
Intent upon his lyre's harmonious sound.
Before his eyes Jove's beauteous daughter stood,
In form and dress a huntress of the wood;
For had he seen the goddess undisguised,
The youth with awe and fear had been surprised.

Fixed he beheld her, and with joy admired
To see a nymph so bright and so attired;
For from her flowing robe a lustre spread,
As if with radiant flame she were arrayed:
Her hair, in part disclosed, in part concealed,
In ringlets fell, or was with jewels held;
With various gold and gems her neck was graced,
And orient pearls heaved on her panting breast:
Bright as the moon she shone, with silent light,
And charmed his sense with wonder and delight.
Thus while Anchises gazed, through every vein
A thrilling joy he felt and pleasing pain.
At length he spake: "All hail, celestial fair!
Who humbly dost to visit earth repair:
Whoe'er thou art, descended from above,
Latona, Cynthia, or the Queen of Love,
All hail! all honor shall to thee be paid;
Or art thou Themis? or the Blue-eyed maid?
Or art thou fairest of the Graces three,
Who with the gods share immortality?
Or else some nymph, the guardian of these woods,
These caves, these fruitful hills, or crystal floods?
Whoe'er thou art, in some conspicuous field
I to thy honor will an altar build,
Where holy off'rings I'll each hour prepare;
Oh! prove but thou propitious to my prayer!
Grant me among the Trojan race to prove
A patriot worthy of my country's love;
Blessed in myself, I beg I next may be
Blessed in my children and posterity;
Happy in health, long let me see the sun,
And, loved by all, late may my days be done."

He said.—Jove's beauteous daughter thus replied:
"Delight of human-kind, thy sex's pride!
Honored Anchises! you behold in me
No goddess blessed with immortality,
But mortal I, of mortal mother came,
Otreus my father, (you have heard the name,)
Who rules the fair extent of Phrygia's lands,
And all her towns and fortresses commands.
When yet an infant, I to Troy was brought;
There was I nursed, and there your language taught:
Then wonder not if, thus instructed young,
I like my own can speak the Trojan tongue.
In me one of Diana's nymphs behold;
Why thus arrived I shall the cause unfold.
"As late our sports we practised on the plain,
I and my fellow nymphs of Cynthia's train,
Dancing in chorus, and with garlands crowned,
And by admiring crowds encompassed round,
Lo! hov'ring o'er my head I saw the god
Who Argus slew, and bears the golden rod;
Sudden he seized, then bore me from their sight,
Cutting through liquid air his rapid flight.
O'er many states and peopled towns we passed,
O'er hills and valleys, and o'er deserts waste;
O'er barren moors, and o'er unwholesome fens,
And woods where beasts inhabit dreadful dens:
Through all which pathless way our speed was such,
We stopt not once the face of earth to touch.
Meantime he told me, while through air we fled,
That Jove ordained I should Anchises wed,
And with illustrious offspring bless his bed.
This said, and pointing to me your abode,

To heaven again up-soared the swift-winged god.
Thus of necessity to you I come,
Unknown and lost, far from my native home.
But I conjure you, by the throne of Jove,
By all that's dear to you, by all you love,
By your good parents, (for no bad could e'er
Produce a son so graceful, good, and fair,)
That you no wiles employ to win my heart,
But let me hence an untouched maid depart;
Inviolate and guiltless of your bed,
Let me be to your house and mother led:
Me to your father and your brothers show,
And our alliance first let them allow:
Let me be known, and my condition owned,
And no unequal match I may be found.
Equality to them my birth may claim,
Worthy a daughter's or a sister's name,
Though for your wife of too inferior fame.
Next let ambassadors to Phrygia haste,
To tell my father of my fortunes past,
And ease my mother in that anxious state
Of doubts and fears which cares for me create.
They in return shall presents bring from thence
Of rich attire, and sums of gold immense:
You in peculiar shall with gifts be graced,
In price and beauty far above the rest.
This done, perform the rites of nuptial love,
Grateful to men below and gods above."
She said, and from her eyes shot subtle fires,
Which to his heart insinuate desires:
Resistless love invading thus his breast,
The panting youth the smiling queen addressed.

"Since mortal you, of mortal mother came,
And Otreus you report, your father's name,
And since th' immortal Hermes from above,
To execute the dread commands of Jove,
Your wondrous beauties hither has conveyed,
A nuptial life with me henceforth to lead;
Know, now, that neither gods nor men have power
One minute to defer the happy hour;
This instant will I seize upon thy charms,
Mix with thy soul, and melt within thy arms:
Though Phœbus, armed with his unerring dart,
Stood ready to transfix my panting heart;
Though death, though hell, in consequence attend,
Thou shalt with me the genial bed ascend."

He said, and sudden snatched her beauteous hand;
The goddess smiled, nor did th' attempt withstand,
But fixed her eyes upon the hero's bed,
Where soft and silken coverlets were spread,
And over all a counterpane was placed,
Thick sown with furs of many a savage beast,
Of bears and lions, heretofore his spoil,
And still remained the trophies of his toil.

Now to ascend the bed they both prepare,
And he with eager haste disrobes the fair.
Her sparkling necklace first he laid aside,
Her bracelets next, and braided hair untied:
And now his busy hand her zone unbraced,
Which girt her radiant robe around her waist;
Her radiant robe at last aside was thrown,
Whose rosy hue with dazzling lustre shone.

The Queen of Love the youth thus disarrayed,
And on a chair of gold her vestments laid.

Anchises now (so Jove and Fate ordained)
The sweet extreme of ecstasy attained;
And mortal he was like th' immortals blessed,
Not conscious of the goddess he possessed.
But when the swains their flocks and herds had fed,
And from the flowery field returning led
Their sheep to fold, and oxen to the shed,
In soft and pleasing chains of sleep profound
The wary goddess her Anchises bound.
Then gently rising from his side and bed,
In all her bright attire her limbs arrayed.
And now her fair-crowned head aloft she rears,
Nor more a mortal, but herself, appears;
Her face refulgent, and majestic mien,
Confessed the goddess, Love's and Beauty's queen.
Then thus aloud she calls: "Anchises! wake;
Thy fond repose and lethargy forsake;
Look on the nymph who late from Phrygia came,
Behold me well—say if I seem the same."
At her first call the chains of sleep were broke,
And starting from his bed Anchises woke;
But when he Venus viewed without disguise,
Her shining neck beheld, and radiant eyes,
Awed and abashed, he turned his head aside,
Attempting with his robe his face to hide:
Confused with wonder, and with fear oppressed,
In winged words he thus the queen addressed:
"When first, O Goddess! I thy form beheld,
Whose charms so far humanity excelled,
To thy celestial power my vows I paid,
And with humility implored thy aid;
But thou, for secret cause to me unknown,

Didst thy divine immortal state disown.
But now I beg thee, by the filial love
Due to thy father, Ægis-bearing Jove,
Compassion on my human state to show,
Nor let me lead a life infirm below;
Defend me from the woes which mortals wait,
Nor let me share of men the common fate;
Since never man with length of days was blessed
Who in delights of love a deity possessed."

To him, Jove's beauteous daughter thus replied:
"Be bold, Anchises: in my love confide;
Nor me nor other god thou need'st to fear,
For thou to all the heavenly race art dear.
Know from our loves thou shalt a son obtain,
Who over all the realm of Troy shall reign;
From whom a race of monarchs shall descend,
And whose posterity shall know no end;
To him thou shalt the name Æneas give,
As one for whose conception I must grieve,
Oft as I think he to exist began
From my conjunction with a mortal man.

"But Troy, of all the habitable earth,
To a superior race of men gives birth,
Producing heroes of th' ethereal kind,
And next resembling gods in form and mind.

"From thence great Jove to azure skies conveyed,
To live with gods, the lovely Ganymede,
Where by th' immortals honored, (strange to see!)
The youth enjoys a blessed eternity;
In bowls of gold he ruddy nectar pours,
And Jove regales in his unbended hours.
Long did the king, his sire, his absence mourn,

Doubtful by whom, or where, the boy was borne,
Till Jove at length, in pity of his grief,
Dispatched Argicides[2] to his relief;
And more with gifts to pacify his mind,
He sent him horses of a deathless kind,
Whose feet outstripped in speed the rapid wind.
Charging withal swift Hermes to relate
The youth's advancement to a heavenly state,
Where all his hours are past in circling joy,
Which age can ne'er decay nor death destroy.
Now when this embassy the king receives,
No more for absent Ganymede he grieves;
The pleasing news his aged heart revives,
And with delight his swift-heeled steeds he drives.
"But when the golden-throned Aurora made
Tithonus partner of her rosy bed,
(Tithonus, too, was of the Trojan line,
Resembling gods in face and form divine,)
For him she straight the Thunderer addressed,
That with perpetual life he might be blest;
Jove heard her prayer, and granted her request.
But ah! how rash was she! how indiscreet!
The most material blessing to omit;
Neglecting, or not thinking, to provide
That length of days might be with strength supplied,
And to her lover's endless life engage
An endless youth, incapable of age.
But hear what fate befell this heavenly fair,
In gold enthroned, the brightest child of Air;
Tithonus, while of pleasing youth possessed,

[2] The slayer of Argus. Mercury, so called, from having slain Argus.

Is by Aurora with delight caressed;
Dear to her arms, he in her court resides,
Beyond the verge of earth, and ocean's utmost tides.
"But when she saw gray hairs begin to spread,
Deform his beard, and disadorn his head,
The goddess cold in her embraces grew,
His arms declined, and from his bed withdrew;
Yet still a kind of nursing care she showed,
And food ambrosial and rich clothes bestowed;
But when of age he felt the sad extreme,
And every nerve was shrunk and limb was lame,
Locked in a room her useless spouse she left,
Of youth, of vigor, and of voice bereft.[3]
On terms like these I never can desire
Thou shouldst to immortality aspire.
"Couldst thou, indeed, as now thou art remain,
Thy strength, thy beauty, and thy youth retain,
Couldst thou forever thus my husband prove,
I might live happy in thy endless love,
Nor should I e'er have cause to dread the day
When I must mourn thy loss and life's decay;
But thou, alas! too soon and sure must bend
Beneath the woes which painful age attend,
Inexorable age! whose wretched state
All mortals dread and all immortals hate.
"Now know I also must my portion share,
And for thy sake reproach and shame must bear;
For I, who heretofore in chains of love
Could captivate the minds of gods above,
And force 'em by my all-subduing charms

[3] Tithonus was feigned at length to have been turned into a grasshopper.

To sigh and languish in a woman's arms,
Must now no more that power superior boast,
Nor tax with weakness the celestial host,
Since I myself this dear amends have made,
And am at last by my own arts betrayed.
"Erring like them, with appetite depraved,
This hour by thee I have a son conceived,
Whom hid beneath my zone I must conceal,
Till time his being and my shame reveal.
Him shall the nymphs who these fair woods adorn,
In their deep bosoms nurse as soon as born;
They nor of mortal nor immortal seed
Are said to spring, yet on ambrosia feed,
And long they live, and oft in chorus join
With gods and goddesses in dance divine.
These the Sileni court; these Hermes loves,
And their embraces seeks in shady groves.
Their origin and birth these nymphs deduce
From common parent Earth's prolific juice;
With lofty firs which grace the mountain's brow,
Or ample-spreading oaks, at once they grow;
All have their trees allotted to their care,
Whose growth, duration, and decrease they share.
But holy are these groves by mortals held,
And therefore by the axe are never felled:
But when the fate of some fair tree draws nigh,
It first appears to droop, and then grows dry;
The bark to crack and perish next is seen,
And last the boughs it sheds no longer green;
And thus the nymphs expire by like degrees,
And live and die coeval with their trees.
"These gentle nymphs by my persuasion won,

Shall in their sweet recesses nurse my son;
And when his cheeks with youth's first blushes glow,
To thee the sacred maids the boy shall show.
"More to instruct thee, when five years shall end,
I will again to visit thee descend,
Bringing thy beauteous son to charm thy sight,
Whose godlike form shall fill thee with delight;
Him will I leave thenceforward to thy care,
And will that with him thou to Troy repair;
There if inquiry shall be made, to know
To whom thou dost so bright an offspring owe,
Be sure thou nothing of the truth detect,
But ready answer make as I direct:
Say of a sylvan nymph the fair youth came,
And Calycopis call his mother's name;
For shouldst thou boast the truth, and madly own
That thou in bliss hadst Cytherea known,
Jove would his anger pour upon thy head,
And with avenging thunder strike thee dead.
Now all is told thee, and just caution given;
Be secret thou, and dread the wrath of heaven."
She said, and sudden soared above his sight,
Cutting through liquid air her heavenward flight.
All hail, bright Cyprian Queen! thee first I praise,
Then to some other power transfer my lays.

HYMN TO CERES.

THE manuscript of the Hymn to Ceres, which, in some parts, is in a very fragmentary state, was discovered in the last century by C. F. Matthæi, in the library of the Holy Synod at Moscow, and communicated by him, together with a few lines of a lost hymn to Bacchus, to David Ruhnken, a professor at the University of Leyden. Ruhnken published it, with critical notes. There has been much diversity of opinion concerning the genuineness of this poem, or, I should rather say, its identity with the Homeric Hymn to Ceres, which certainly existed in the second century, and is often quoted by Pausanias.[1] The passages cited by Pausanias differ in a slight degree from lines to be found in this poem. Wolf seems to hold this discovered hymn very cheap; but he speaks with reference to its claim to absolute genuineness. Without allowing which, we may certainly consider it in the same point of view as we do the other hymns commonly attributed to Homer; and though it is not equal in vigor and beauty to the three principal hymns before mentioned, it is still a very lively and picturesque poem, smooth and flowing in its language, and curious and peculiar in some of its incidents.

Grote, after giving an analysis of this hymn, says, "It is interesting not less as a picture of the Mater Dolorosa, (in the mouth of an Athenian, Demeter and Persephone were always the Mother and Daughter, by

[1] Attic. 38. Messen. 38. Corinth. 14.

excellence,) first an agonized sufferer, and then finally glorified—the weal and woe of men being dependent upon her kindly feeling—than as an illustration of the nature and growth of Grecian legend generally. Though we now read this hymn as pleasing poetry, to the Eleusinians, for whom it was composed, it was genuine and sacred history. They believed in the visit of Demeter to Eleusis, and in the mysteries as a revelation from her, as implicitly as they believed in her existence and power as a goddess."

HYMN TO CERES.

TRANSLATED BY RICHARD HOLE.

CERES! to thee belongs the votive lay,
Whose locks in radiance round thy temples play,
And Proserpine, whom, distant from thy sight,
Fierce Pluto bore to realms of endless night.
For thus decreed the god whose piercing eyes
Trace every act, whose thunder shakes the skies,
That she, whose hands the golden sickle bear,
And choicest product of the circling year,
Rich fruits, and fragrant-breathing flowers, should know
The tender conflicts of maternal woe.
In Nysia's vale, with nymphs a lovely train,
Sprung from the hoary father of the main,
Fair Proserpine consumed the fleeting hours
In pleasing sports, and plucked the gaudy flowers.
Around them wide the flamy crocus glows,
Through leaves of verdure blooms the opening rose;
The hyacinth declines his fragrant head,
And purple violets deck th' enamelled mead.
The fair Narcissus far above the rest,
By magic formed, in beauty rose confessed.

So Jove, t' ensnare the virgin's thoughtless mind,
And please the ruler of the shades, designed.
He caused it from the opening earth to rise,
Sweet to the scent, alluring to the eyes.
Never did mortal or celestial power
Behold such vivid tints adorn a flower.
From the deep root an hundred branches sprung,
And to the winds ambrosial odors flung;
Which, lightly wafted on the wings of air,
The gladdened earth and heaven's wide circuit share.
The joy-dispensing fragrance spreads around,
And ocean's briny swell with smiles is crowned.
Pleased at the sight, nor deeming danger nigh,
The fair beheld it with desiring eye:
Her eager hand she stretched to seize the flower,
(Beauteous illusion of th' ethereal power!)
When, dreadful to behold, the rocking ground
Disparted—widely yawned a gulf profound!
Forth-rushing from the black abyss, arose
The gloomy monarch of the realm of woes,
Pluto, from Saturn sprung. The trembling maid
He seized, and to his golden car conveyed.
Borne by immortal steeds the chariot flies:
And thus she pours her supplicating cries:
"Assist, protect me, thou who reign'st above,
Supreme and best of gods, paternal Jove!"
But ah! in vain the hapless virgin rears
Her wild complaint: nor god nor mortal hears!
Not to the white-armed nymphs with beauty crowned,
Her loved companions, reached the mournful sound.
Pale Hecate, who in the cell of night
Muses on youthful pleasure's rapid flight;

And bright Hyperion's son, who decks the skies
With splendor, only heard the virgin's cries
Invoke the father of th' ethereal powers.
But he, at distance from their airy bowers,
Sits in his hallowed fane ; his votaries hears,
Accepts their offerings, and rewards their prayers.
While hell's dread ruler in his car conveyed
To realms of darkness the reluctant maid.

Long as she viewed the star-bespangled skies,
And ocean's many-teeming waters rise ;
While earth's gay verdure fled not from her view,
Nor Phœbus yet his cheerful light withdrew ;
So long the ray of hope illumed her breast,
Nor sunk her soul, undaunted though distressed.
Her mother still she thought would meet her sight,
And friendly powers who dwelt in realms of light.
E'en ocean's depths resounded to her cry,
And lofty mountains towering to the sky !

At length, the shrieks of woe her mother hears ·
Her heavenly breast the shaft of anguish tears.
The blooming wreath she from her brow unbinds,
Rends her bright locks, and gives them to the winds :
Then (mournful emblem of her inward woes !)
A sable veil athwart her shoulders throws.
As some fond bird her ravished young deplores,
And every secret shade in vain explores ;
To seek the fair she flies o'er sea and land,
The burning torches waving in her hand.
Nor gods nor men the author of her woes
Unfold : no birds of omened flight disclose.

Nine tedious days in vain the queen adored
The various regions of the earth explored ;

Nor did she taste, while she her course pursued,
The balmy nectar or ambrosial food ;
Nor ever in the cool translucent wave,
Toil's sweet-relief, her form of beauty lave.
On the tenth morn, as, chasing night's dull gloom,
Aurora's beams the purpled east illume,
Pale Hecate before her view appeared ;
Her hand the faintly-gleaming taper reared,
And thus began : "O thou ! to whom we owe
Those joys the season's circling flight bestow ;
What god, what mortal dared the impious deed,
That makes a heavenly breast with sorrow bleed ?
I heard thy daughter's voice implore relief ;
Unknown to me the author of her grief—" [2]

* * * * * *

She ceased ; nor did the goddess make reply,
But sudden waved the flaming torch on high,
And sought the ruler of the day ; whose sight
From the pure regions of unclouded light
All actions views. Before his car they came ;
The burning car and horses breathing flame
Stopped sudden. Ceres thus : "O Phœbus ! hear !
My fame, my ancient dignity revere !
If e'er my blessings gave thy soul delight,
Those blessings now by friendship's act requite.
A daughter late was mine of beauteous form—
(Sweet, tender plant, uprooted by a storm !)

[2] Some part of Hecate's speech appears to have been lost. She relates nothing more to Ceres than what she knew before ; and yet, from what follows, one would suppose that her information had conveyed to the goddess some additional cause for grief and vexation.—*Hole.*

Distant I heard her loud-lamenting cries ;
But fate severe denied her to my eyes.
O thou ! who, crowned with ether's purest light,
Through earth and ocean dart'st thy boundless sight,
Tell me what god, what mortal, has conveyed
Reluctant from these arms my darling maid ?"
" Daughter of Rhea !" he replied, " I hear
With grief thy wrongs, and dignity revere.
Blame not th' ethereal race : from heaven's dread king,
Who dwells 'mid black'ning clouds, thy sorrows spring.
Pluto, by his decree, the virgin bore
Where, darkly frowning on th' infernal shore,
His lofty palace stands. No more repine ;
No cause for anguish nor for shame is thine.
He, brother to the god who rules on high,
Now hails her empress of the lower sky :
For Saturn's awful race superior reign
O'er heaven, o'er hell, and earth-encircling main."
He said ; and then (his course no more delayed)
Spoke to his fiery steeds : his steeds obeyed.
Whirled rapid onward through th' illumined skies,
The flame-robed chariot kindles as it flies :
Swift, as when rushing through the blaze of day,
Darts the fierce eagle on his distant prey.
But deeper anguish rends the mother's soul,
And thoughts of vengeance in her bosom roll ;
She shuns th' imperious power who rules on high,
And quits th' immortal synod of the sky.
Then, furious from Olympus' airy height
To earth precipitates her rapid flight.
There, mingling with the race of man, she shares
Their various toils ; consumed with grief appears

Her beauteous form; unknown from shore to shore
She roves; till Celeus' hospitable door
Receives her steps. He in Eleusis reigned,
Where still her rites and honors are maintained.
Beside a path, while o'er her drooping head
His grateful shade the verdant olive spread,
As by her feet Parthenius' waters flow,
She sits, a pallid spectacle of woe.
Her faded cheeks no more with beauty bloomed,
But now the form of wrinkled age assumed.
She seemed like those whom each attractive grace
Forsakes, when time with wrinkles marks the face;
From whom the Cyprian power indignant flies,
Her gifts refuses, and her charms denies;
Who, in some regal dome, by fate severe,
Are doomed to nurse and serve another's heir.
Four gentle nymphs, light-moving o'er the plain,
Approach; four brazen urns their arms sustain:
Great Celeus was their sire: he bade them bring
The limpid water from Parthenius' spring.
Lovely they seemed as heaven's immortal powers:
Youth's purple light and beauty's opening flowers
Glowed on their cheeks: Callidice the fair,
And meek Clausidice with pensive air;
Then Demo, and Callithoe's riper grace
Appeared, the eldest of the lovely race.
They hail the power unknown, (for mortal eyes
How hard to penetrate a god's disguise!)
"Who and whence art thou, dame! whose brow appears
Marked by the traces of revolving years?
Why dost thou shun yon peopled town? in grief
Why lonely sit?—there thou wilt find relief:

There, matrons like thyself, who long the load
Of life have borne, and traced its rugged road,
Employed in labors such as best engage
The pleased attention of declining age,
With tender maids, thy sorrows shall condole,
And acts of friendship cheer thy drooping soul!"
"Hail! nymphs unknown!" the goddess thus rejoined,
"Accept the tribute of a grateful mind.
Would you the story of my sorrows know,
Attend to no fictitious tale of woe.
"Reluctant from the Cretan coast I came;
Dear native land! and Doris is my name.
To ruffians' force who plough the wat'ry way,
I fell a helpless, unresisting prey.
The bark bounds swiftly o'er the liquid main,
And soon the coast of Thoricus[8] we gain.
The vessel safely moored, a female band
Prepare the banquet on the neighb'ring strand;
Whilst wide around us eve's gray vapors rise,
And her dim shades roll slowly through the skies.
But, deeply-musing on my woes, I pine,
Nor share the feast nor taste the cheerful wine.
When through the sky night's deeper gloom was spread,
Unnoticed, trembling o'er the beach I fled.
The spoiler's lust of gold I rendered vain;
Unransomed, thus escaped the galling chain
Of servitude, long time from shore to shore
I wandered; various toils and perils bore.
To me e'en now unknown, ere you unfold,
The land I tread, the people I behold.

[8] A town and demus in Attica.

"To you, ye virgins! may th' ethereal powers
Who o'er Olympus dwell in airy bowers,
Shed choicest favors! may your consorts prove
Of lovely form, deserving of your love!
And be your children with such beauty blest,
As hope can image in a parent's breast!
Then, gentle maids, in pity to my woes,
How best I can obtain relief, disclose;
In yonder town with pleasure I'll engage
In tasks best suited to my feeble age.
Well-skilled in household toils, to please my lord
The couch I'll spread, and crown the festive board;
Or should a child be trusted to my care,
These arms shall nurse him and these knees shall bear."
She ceased. The loveliest of a lovely line,
Callídice, replied: "No more repine!
But know, whate'er th' immortal gods ordain,
It is our part to suffer, not complain:
Enough for us that justice rules their mind,
Whose wisdom, like their power, is unconfined.
The chiefs who here supreme dominion hold
Be it my task, O stranger! to unfold:
Through whom Eleusis hostile rage defies;
Beneath whose care yon guardian ramparts rise;
From whom protecting law derives its force,
And awful justice holds her steady course:
Triptolemus, of deep-revolving mind,
Diocles noble, Polyxenus kind;
With every milder grace Eumolpus crowned,
And stately Dolichus in arms renowned.
Superior to the rest, o'er these domains,
Our honored sire, the mighty Celeus, reigns.

Each chief a lovely consort boasts, who guides
Domestic labors, and at home presides:
Not one of them who would thy suit reject,
But soothe thy sorrows and thy age respect:
For sure, thou seem'st of more than mortal race,
Though time with wrinkles marks thy pallid face.
But if thou here wilt rest, without delay
We'll to our mother's ears thy tale convey.
If she approves, accept a welcome there:
An only child, an unexpected heir,
Born to his parents in declining age,
Our darling pleasure, will thy cares engage.
Shouldst thou preserve him (kindly thus employed)
Till ripening manhood make thy labors void,
Such gifts hereafter he'll on thee bestow,
As those will envy most who best shall know."
The virgin ceased; nor aught the goddess said,
But bowed submissive her assenting head.
The liquid crystal fills their polished urns:
Each nymph exulting to the town returns.
Arrived at Celeus' dome, they quick disclose
The stranger's humble suit and tale of woes
To Metanira:[4] pleased at the request,
Maternal fondness glowing in her breast,
She bids them to the matron thus declare,
That ample treasures should reward her care.
Like the kine's lowing race, that sportive bound
Along the plain with flowery verdure crowned;
Or the sleek fawn, when he at first perceives
Spring's genial warmth, and crops the budding leaves;

[4] The wife of Celeus.

Th' unconscious child: his parents wond'ring trace
Something divine, a more than mortal grace
Shine in his form; and she designed the boy,
To chance superior and to time's annoy,
Crowned with unceasing joys in heaven should reign:
Those thoughts a mother's rashness rendered vain!
  One fatal night, neglectful of repose,
Her couch forsaking, Metanira rose;
And from her secret stand beheld the flame
Receive the infant. Terror shakes her frame!
She shricks in agony; she smites her thighs;
And thus she pours her loud-lamenting cries:
  "O Demophon, my child! this stranger guest,
What causeless rage, what frenzy has possessed?
Consuming flames around thy body roll,
And anguish rends thy mother's tortured soul!"
  Wrath seized the goddess; her immortal hands
Sudden she plunged amid the fiery brands;
And full before th' afflicted mother's view
On the cold floor the blameless infant threw,
And furious thus began: "O mortals vain!
Whose folly counteracts what gods ordain!
Who, lost in error's maze, will never know
Approaching blessings from impending woe!
Long for the rashness that thy soul possessed,
Shall keen reflection agonize thy breast.
For, by that oath which binds the powers supreme
I swear! by sable Styx, infernal stream!
Else had thy son in youth's perpetual prime
Shared heavenly joys, and mocked the rage of time.
But now 'tis past! from fate he cannot fly!
Man's common lot is his—he breathes to die!

But since a goddess on her knees caressed
Thy child, since oft he slumbered on her breast,
Fame shall attend his steps, and bright renown
With wreaths unfading shall his temples crown.
In future times, torn by discordant rage,
Eleusis' sons commutual war shall wage;
Then Demophon."

* * * * * *

"Know then that Ceres, from whose bounty flow
Those blessings the revolving years bestow,
Who, both from gods and man's frail race demands
Her honors due, before thy presence stands.
Away, and let Eleusis' sons unite,
Where steep Callichorus' projecting height
Frowns o'er the plain, a stately fane to rear:
Her awful rites its goddess shall declare.
There with pure hearts upon the hallowed shrine
Your victims slay, and soothe a power divine!"

This said; the front of age so late assumed
Dissolved; her face with charms celestial bloomed.
The sacred vesture that around her flew
Through the wide air ambrosial odors threw;
Her lovely form with sudden radiance glowed;
Her golden locks in wreaths of splendor flowed.
Through the dark palace streamed a flood of light,
As cloud-engendered fires illume the night
With dazzling blaze. Then swiftly from their view,
Urged by indignant rage, the goddess flew.

In Metanira's breast amazement reigned:
Silent she stood; nor long her knees sustained
Their tottering weight; she sunk in grief profound;
The child neglected, shrieking on the ground

Beside her lay: his agonizing cries
The sisters hear, and from their couches rise:
They snatch him from the floor; the fire suppressed
One lights anew; one fondly to her breast
The infant folds; by filial duty swayed,
Another hastes to Metanira's aid.
And now they gathered round th' afflicted child,
And bathed his beauteous form with dust defiled:
With broken sobs he ceased not to complain;
A different nurse he sought, but sought in vain.
To soothe the goddess' rage, with awe impressed,
In deep consult they passed the hours of rest;
Till night her dreary shadows rolled away,
And bright Aurora brought the cheerful day:
Then, as she bade, around whose brow divine,
The blooming flowers, a lovely wreath, entwine,
They to the ruler of Eleusis' state
The wonders of th' eventful night relate.
The sages of the land convened, his will
He thus unfolds: "that on th' impending hill
Of steep Callichorus, to the bright-haired power
An altar rise, and stately temple tower."
Gladly the chiefs assent: with busy care
The people soon the splendid fabric rear.
A power superior aids their warm desire;
They hail the omen, and with joy retire.
There Ceres, distant from the powers divine,
Sits deeply musing in her hallowed shrine.
The eager wish to view her daughter's face,
Again to fold her with a fond embrace,
Consumes her beauteous form; alternate roll
The tides of grief and vengeance in her soul.

She to the earth her genial power denies:
The corn unfruitful in its bosom lies:
The oxen draw the crooked plough in vain;
No waving verdure decks the blasted plain:
Pale famine spreads around: each mortal breast
Is sunk with woe and by despair possessed.
One common fate had now involved them all,
And the blest gods who in th' aerial hall
Of high Olympus reign, by man adored,
Their votaries' vows and offerings had deplored:
But Jove revolving on the ills designed
By Ceres, to appease her wrathful mind,
Sends the bright goddess of the splendid bow,
Whose gold-bespangled wings with lustre glow.
Through yielding air with matchless speed she flew;
Eleusis' temple rose before her view.
There, while rich incense wafted fragrance round,
Clad in her sable veil the queen she found,
And thus began: "The ruler of the sky
Calls thee to meet th' assembled gods on high:
Oh! haste, with them celestial pleasures prove;
Nor fruitless be the words that come from Jove!"
Iris in vain her soothing words addressed;
The goddess yields not to her kind request:
In vain, at his command who sways the skies,
Th' immortals sue; she hears and she denies:
Their proffered honors and their gifts disdains,
And in her breast relentless vengeance reigns.
Firmly resolved where high Olympus towers
She ne'er would mingle with th' ethereal powers,
Nor fruitful earth's productive force renew,
Till her loved daughter met her longing view.

When the dread power whose thunder shakes the skies,
From whose keen sight no act unnoticed lies,
Heard her determined will, he gave command
To Maia's son, who bears the golden wand,
That straight to Erebus he wing his way,
And woo the god whom shadowy forms obey
With words persuasive ; that his queen adored
In Stygian realms might be to heaven restored,
And, mingling with the powers celestial, ease
Her mother's anxious soul, and wrath appease.
Hermes obeys, and from the realms of day
To Tartarus directs his rapid way ;
There, in the centre of the earth profound,
The monarch of th' infernal realms he found
High-throned in gloomy state ; beside her lord
Fair Proserpine her mother's loss deplored,
Who, deep-revolving in her troubled mind,
Dire vengeance 'gainst th' ethereal race designed.
Hermes began : " O thou ! whose awful head
Is crowned with sable locks, to whom the dead
Submissive reverence pay, the sire of gods,
Great Jove decrees that, from these dark abodes,
By me, thy consort, crowned with beauty's charms,
Should be to heaven restored and Ceres' arms.
For know, such vengeful thoughts her soul inspire
That e'en the immortal gods must feel her ire.
No golden harvests now the plains adorn,
In earth she hides the life-sustaining corn,
And man must fall ; to those who rule the skies
No honors shall be paid, no prayers arise.
Far, far from them, with rage-enkindled heart,
She in her lofty temple sits apart,

Reared by Eleusis to her power divine,
Where clouds of incense roll around her shrine."
The gloomy monarch Jove's commands obeyed;
Reluctant smiles his dark-bent brows displayed:
And thus his blooming consort he addressed:
"Go, Proserpine! let pleasure sway thy breast;
No more let memory recall the past,
But to thy mother's fond embraces haste.
'Tis fruitless, nay, 'tis folly to complain—
Nor I a husband that deserves disdain—
Brother to Jove supreme! Hence, then, my fair!
And soon again to Pluto's arms repair.
Honor to thee the heavenly powers shall pay;
Thee shall the shadowy forms of hell obey;
And those who ne'er on earth invoked thy aid,
Nor victims slew nor rich oblations paid,
By thee condemned, shall prove eternal pains
In the dark realms where endless horror reigns."
He said; and sudden from her seat arose
His lovely bride; her heart with transport glows;
Then Pluto feared, lest from the realms above,
And Ceres, object of her filial love,
She'd ne'er return; and fraudulent decreed
The fair should taste the rich pomegranate's seed—
A fatal pledge! The ruler of the dead
Then to their view his sable coursers led;
And yoked them to the splendid car; his bride
Assumed the seat, with Hermes by her side,
The god, whose fury to th' infernal plains
Hurled hapless Argus; firm he grasped the reins,
And waved the lash; the steeds impetuous flew;
The realms of darkness vanished from their view;

Onward they rush, impatient of delay,
Nor seas nor rapid streams impede their way:
Nor towering heights, which dark'ning clouds surround,
Nor low-sunk vales with verdant herbage crowned.
With steady ardor, unabated force,
Through depth of air they urge their rapid course;
Till Ceres' sacred temple they behold,
Where clouds of incense round her altar rolled.
Soon as the goddess viewed her daughter's face,
With eager speed she rushed to her embrace.
Thus when the hind her long-lost fawn espies,
In transport from the mountain's brow she flies.[7]

* * * * * *

"Thou here with Ceres, daughter of my love,
Shalt stay, high-honored by the powers above:
But if thou aught in Pluto's drear abode
Hast ate, thou must retrace the gloomy road;
And with th' infernal god his sceptre share
One tedious third of the revolving year:
The rest shalt thou partake with heavenly powers;
And when with herbage green and blooming flowers
Spring decks the earth, thou shalt ascend the skies,
A joy to mortal and celestial eyes."

* * * * * *

"Say, by what art thy unsuspecting mind
The god deceived?" Thus Proserpine rejoined:
"When the winged herald of the powers above
Came with the mandate of all-ruling Jove,

[7] Here the manuscript is mutilated. The meeting of the mother and daughter, and the inquiries of the former, whether Proserpine, by eating any thing, has rendered herself subject to the dominion of the shades, formed the missing portion.

Again to bear me to th' ethereal skies,
And give me to thy long-desiring eyes,
That thus thy vengeful rage might be suppressed,
My heart with transport bounded in my breast.
But then, so hell's imperious lord decreed,
I ate reluctant the pernicious seed.[8]
"Joyful I wandered through the verdant plain,
Leucippe, Phæno, Rhodia in my train:
With them Electra, Ianira strayed,
And Rhodope in beauty's charms arrayed:
Ocyroe too was there of roseate hue;
Her golden locks around Chryseis flew:
Calypso's charming form, Urania's grace,
And Galaxaure's love-inspiring face;
Pallas, who bids the rage of battle glow,
And chaste Diana with her sounding bow.
In pleasing sports the fleeting hours we wear,
And pluck the blushing honors of the year.
Lilies and hyacinths the air perfume;
The crocus glows, th' expanding roses bloom:
But lovelier far I view with joyful eyes
The fair Narcissus from the earth arise.
This wondrous flower, the meadow's blooming pride,
I rushed to seize. The rent earth opening wide,

[8] Here appears to be an omission, unless the speech of Proserpine has been transposed through some mistake. It should probably have begun with the following line:

"Joyful I wandered through the Nysian plain;"

and after that which now concludes the speech, should follow the account of Mercury's coming to her in the palace of Pluto, with which it now begins. As it stands at present, Proserpine concludes her narrative with telling Ceres that she is still sorrowful; and the lines that immediately follow describe their mutual joy at meeting with each other.—*Hole.*

A dreary gulf disclosed: from thence appeared
The mighty king in Tartarus revered,
And bore me to his golden car; in vain
I weep, resist, and to the gods complain.
Swift flies his chariot to the realms below,
And still my bosom bleeds at former woe!"
With mutual joy they now sweet converse hold,
And now each other in their arms enfold;
And, all the live-long day, the transports prove
That flow from filial and maternal love.
No thoughts of vengeance Ceres' soul infest:
But harmony and pleasure rule her breast.
Soon Hecate approached, and hailed the fair,
A splendid fillet bound her flowing hair:
To Proserpine her breast with friendship glowed,
And all her acts a kind attention showed.
And now th' all-seeing god, whose thunders shake
Th' aerial regions, thus to Rhea spake:
(Around whose form her robes in darkness flew;
From whom her birth the queen of seasons drew:)
"Let Ceres hasten to th' ethereal plain,
And every honor she desires obtain.
Her Proserpine, with heavenly powers, shall share
In joy two parts of the revolving year,
The rest in realms of night." The Thunderer said:
The willing goddess his commands obeyed;
And from Olympus' cloud-encircled height
Bends to Callichorus her lofty flight:
O'er the drear region desolation frowned,
So late with fruits and waving verdure crowned
But soon the earth its wonted power regains;
Again the harvest clothes th' extended plains;

Increasing ploughshares turn the grateful soil,
And weighty sheaves reward the lab'rers' toil.
Through air's ungenial void the goddess bends
Her flight sublime, and now on earth descends.
Each kindred power to hail the other flies,
Joy rules their hearts and sparkles in their eyes.
At length sage Rhea, round whose awful head
The wreath of splendor glowed, to Ceres said,
"Jove calls my daughter to th' ethereal plain;
Such honors as thy soul desires, obtain.
He wills two parts of the revolving year
Thy Proserpine shall heavenly pleasures share;
The rest in realms of night. His sacred nod
Confirmed the promise of the all-ruling god.
Haste then: no more oppose with wrathful mind
Heaven's mighty lord 'mid dark'ning clouds enshrined:
But thy kind influence to the earth impart,
And with thy blessings cheer man's drooping heart."
The power whose brow the flowery wreath entwines
Obeys her word; her anger she resigns.
Th' extended plains with fruits and flowers are crowned,
And plenty reigns, and nature smiles around.
Then to the chiefs who o'er Eleusis swayed,
Whose righteous laws the grateful realm obeyed,
Eumolpus, and Triptolemus the sage,
Diocles skilled to tame the courser's rage,
Kind Polyxenus, and the king who reigned
Supreme, great Celeus, she her rites explained;
Those sacred mysteries, for the vulgar ear
Unmeet; and known, most impious to declare!
Oh! let due reverence for the gods restrain
Discourses rash, and check inquiries vain!

Thrice happy he among the favored few,
To whom 'tis given those glorious rites to view!
A fate far different the rejected share;
Unblest, unworthy her protecting care,
They'll perish: and with chains of darkness bound,
Be plunged forever in the gulf profound!
Her laws established, to the realms of light
With Proserpine she wings her towering flight:
The sacred powers assume their seat on high,
Beside the god whose thunders shake the sky.
Happy, thrice happy he of human race,
Who proves deserving their benignant grace!
Plutus, who from his unexhausted stores
To favored mortals boundless treasure pours,
Th' auspicious deities to him shall send;
And prosperous fortune shall his steps attend.
And now, O Ceres! at thy hallowed shrine
Submissive bow the Eleusinian line:
Antron's dark rocks reëcho with thy praise,
And sea-surrounded Paros thee obeys.
Goddess! through whom the seasons' circling flight
Successive blessings pours, and new delight;
And thou, O lovely Proserpine! reward
With honored age and tranquil joys the bard
Who sings your acts; and soon his voice he'll raise,
And other strains shall celebrate your praise.

MINOR HYMNS.

TRANSLATED BY

GEORGE CHAPMAN.

HYMN TO VENUS.

THE reverend, rich-crowned, and fair queen, I sing,
Venus, that owns in fate the fortressing
Of all maritimal Cyprus; where the force
Of gentle-breathing Zephyr steered her course
Along the waves of the resounding sea;
While yet unborn in that soft foam she lay
That brought her forth. Whom those fair Hours, that bear
The golden bridles, joyfully stood near,
Took up into their arms, and put on her
Weeds of a never-corruptible wear.
On her immortal head a crown they placed,
Elaborate, and with all the beauties graced
That gold could give it: of a weight so great
That, to impose and take off, it had set
Three handles on it, made for endless hold,
Of shining brass, and all adorned with gold.
Her soft neck all with carcanets was graced,
That stooped and both her silver breasts embraced,
Which even the hours themselves wear in resort
To deities' dances and her father's court.
Graced at all parts, they brought to heaven her graces,
Whose first sight seen, all fell into embraces;
Hugged her white hands, saluted, wishing all
To wear her maiden flower in festival
Of sacred Hymen, and to lead her home.
All, to all admiration, overcome

With Cytherea with the violet crown.
So to the black-browed-sweet-spoke all renown;
Prepare my song, and give me, in the end,
The victory, to whose palm all contend.
So shall my muse forever honor thee,
And, for thy sake, thy fair posterity.

HYMN TO BACCHUS.

AMONGST the smaller hymns, that entitled "Bacchus, or the Pirates," is particularly worthy of attention. The picturesqueness and vigor of design in this little poem are very remarkable; the language and versification are beautiful. The story is the metamorphosis, by Bacchus, of all but one of a crew of pirates into dolphins or porpoises, and their vessel into a vine-tree; and is the original of similar narratives in Ovid, Propertius, and Seneca.

OF Dionysus, noble Semele's son,
I now intend to render mention:
As on a prominent shore his person shone,
Like to a youth whose flower was newly blown,
Bright azure tresses played about his head,
And on his bright broad shoulders was dispread
A purple mantle. Straight he was descried
By certain manly pirates, that applied
Their utmost speed to prize him, being aboard
A well-built bark, about whose broad sides roared
The wine-black Tyrrhene billows: death as black
Brought them upon him in their future wreck.

For soon as they had purchased but his view,
Mutual signs passed them, and ashore they flew ;
Took him, and brought him instantly aboard,
Soothing their hopes, to have obtained a hoard
Of riches with him ; and a Jove-kept king
To such a flower must needs be natural spring.
And therefore straight strong fetters they must fetch
To make him sure. But no such strength would stretch
To his constrained powers. Far flew all their bands
From any least force done his feet or hands.
But he sat casting smiles from his black eyes
At all their worst. At which discoveries
Made by the master, he did thus dehort
All his associates : "Wretches ! of what sort
Hold ye the person ye assay to bind ?
Nay, which of all the powerfully-divined
Esteem ye him ? Whose worth yields so much weight
That not our well-built bark will bear his freight.
Or Jove himself he is ; or he that bears
The silver bow ; or Neptune. Nor appears
In him the least resemblance of a man,
But of a strain at least Olympian.
Come ! make we quick dismission of his state ;
And on the black-soiled earth exonerate
Our sinking vessel of his deified load,
Nor dare the touch of an intangible god.
Lest winds outrageous, and of wreckful scathe,
And smoking tempests blow his fiery wrath."
This well-spoke master the tall captain gave
Hateful and horrible language ; called him slave ;
And bade him mark the prosperous gale that blew,
And how their vessel with her main-sail flew.

Bade all take arms, and said their works required
The cares of men, and not of an inspired
Pure zealous master. His firm hopes being fired
With this opinion, that they should arrive
In Egypt straight; or Cyprus; or where live
Men whose brave breaths above the north wind blow;
Yea, and perhaps beyond their region too.
And that he made no doubt, but in the end
To make his prisoner tell him every friend
Of all his offspring, brothers, wealth, and all;
Since that prize, certain, must some god let fall.
This said, the mast and mainsail up he drew,
And in the mainsail's midst a frank gale blew,
When all his ship took arms to brave their prize.
But straight, strange works appeared to all their eyes;
First, sweet wine through their swift-black bark did flow,
Of which the odors did a little blow
Their fiery spirits, making th' air so fine,
That they in flood were there as well as wine.
A mere immortal-making savor rose,
Which on the air the deity did impose.
The seamen, seeing all, admiration seized,
Yet instantly their wonders were increased;
For on the topsail there ran, here and there,
A vine that grapes did in abundance bear,
And in an instant was the ship's mainmast
With an obscure-green-ivy's arms embraced,
That flourished straight, and were with berries graced;
Of which did garlands circle every brow
Of all the pirates, and no one knew how.
Which when they saw, they made the master steer
Out to the shore, whom Bacchus made forbear,

With showing more wonders. On the hatches he
Appeared a terrible lion, horribly
Roaring; and in the mid-deck, a male bear,
Made with a huge mane: making all, for fear,
Crowd to the stern, about the master there,
Whose mind he still kept dauntless and sincere.
But on the captain rushed and ramped, with force
So rude and sudden, that his main recourse
Was to the main sea straight: and after him
Leaped all his mates, as trusting to their swim,
To fly foul death. But so, found what they fled,
Being all to dolphins metamorphosed.

The master he took ruth of, saved, and made
The blessed'st man that ever tried his trade;
These few words giving him: "Be confident,
Thou god-inspired pilot! in the bent
Of my affection, ready to requite
Thy late-to-me-intended benefit.
I am the roaring god of sprightly wine,
Whom Semele (that did even Jove incline
To amorous mixture, and was Cadmus' care)
Made issue to the mighty Thunderer."

And thus, all excellence of grace to thee,
Son of sweet-count'nance-carrying Semele.
I must not thee forget, in least degree;
But pray thy spirit to render so my song
Sweet, and all ways in ordered fury strong.

HYMN TO MARS.

MARS-most-strong, gold-helmed, making chariots crack;
Never without a shield cast on thy back;
Mind-master, town-guard, with darts never driven;
Strong-handed, all arms, fort, and fence of heaven;
Father of victory, with fair strokes given;
Joint surrogate of justice, lest she fall
In unjust strifes; a tyrant; general,
Only of just men justly; that dost bear
Fortitude's sceptre; to heaven's fiery sphere
Giver of circular motion, between
That and the Pleiads' that still wand'ring been;
Where thy still-vehemently-flaming horse
About the third heaven make their fiery course;
Helper of mortals, hear! As thy fires give
The fair and present boldnesses that strive
In youth for honor, being the sweet-beamed light
That darts into their lives, from all thy height,
The fortitudes and fortunes found in fight,
So would I likewise wish to have the power
To keep off from my head thy bitter hour,
And, that false fire cast from my soul's low kind,
Stoop to the fit rule of my highest mind;
Controlling that so eager sting of wrath
That stirs me on still to that horrid scathe
Of war, that God still sends to wreak his spleen
(Even by whole tribes) of proud injurious men.
  But O thou ever-blessed! give me still
Presence of mind to put in act my will,

Varied as fits to all occasion.
And to live free, unforced, unwrought upon,
Beneath those laws of peace that never are
Affected with pollutions popular
Of unjust hurt, or loss to any one;
And to bear safe the burthen undergone
Of foes inflexive, and inhuman hates,
Secure from violent and harmful fates.

HYMN TO DIANA.

DIANA praise, Muse, that in darts delights,
Lives still a maid, and had nutritial rights
With her born-brother, the far-shooting Sun,
That doth her all-of-gold-made-chariot run
In chase of game, from Meles that abounds
In black-browed bulrushes, (and where her hounds
She first uncouples, joining there her horse,)
Though Smyrna, carried in most fiery course
To grape-rich Claros. Where (in his rich home,
And constant expectation she will come)
Sits Phœbus that the silver bow doth bear,
To meet with Phœbe, that doth darts transfer
As far as he his shafts. As far then be
Thy chaste fame shot, O queen of archery!
Sacring my song to every deity.

HYMN TO VENUS.

To Cyprian Venus still my verses vow,
Who gifts as sweet as honey doth bestow
On all mortality; that ever smiles
And rules a face that all foes reconciles.
Ever sustaining in her hand a flower
That all desire keeps ever in her power.
  Hail, then, O queen of well-built Salamine,
And all the state that Cyprus doth confine;
Inform my song with that celestial fire
That in thy beauties kindles all desire.
So shall my muse forever honor thee,
And any other thou commend'st to me.

HYMN TO MINERVA.

PALLAS MINERVA, only I begin
To give my song, that makes war's terrible din;
Is patroness of cities, and with Mars
Marshalled in all the care and cure of wars;
And in everted cities fights and cries,
But never doth herself set down or rise
Before a city, but at both times she
All injured people sets on foot and free.
  Give, with thy war's force, fortune then to me;
And with thy wisdom's force, felicity.

HYMN TO JUNO.

SATURNIA, and her throne of gold, I sing,
That was of Rhea the eternal spring,
And empress of a beauty never yet
Equalled in height of tincture. Of the great
Saturnius (breaking air in awful noise)
The far-famed wife and sister, whom in joys
Of high Olympus all the blessed love,
And honor equal with unequalled Jove.

HYMN TO CERES.

THE rich-haired Ceres I assay to sing;
A goddess, in whose grace the natural spring
Of serious majesty itself is seen;
And of the wedded, yet in grace still green,
Proserpina her daughter that displays
A beauty, casting every way her rays.
All honor to thee, goddess; keep this town,
And take thou chief charge of my song's renown.

HYMN TO THE MOTHER OF THE GODS.

MOTHER of all, both gods and men, commend,
O Muse! whose fair form did from Jove descend;
That doth with cymbal sounds delight her life,
And tremulous divisions of the fife;

Loves dreadful lions' roars, and wolves' hoarse howls,
Sylvan retreats; and hills, whose hollow knolls
Raise repercussive sounds about her ears.
And so may honor ever crown thy years,
With all-else goddesses; and ever be
Exalted in the Muse's harmony.

HYMN TO LION-HEARTED HERCULES.

ALCIDES, forcefullest of all the brood
Of men enforced with need of earthy food,
My muse shall memorize, the son of Jove;
Whom in fair-seated Thebes (commixed in love
With great heaven's sable-cloud-assembling state)
Alcmena bore to him. And who in date
Of days forepast, through all the sea was sent,
And Earth's inenarrable continent,
To acts that King Eurystheus had decreed:
Did many a petulant and imperious deed
Himself, and therefore suffered many a toil;
Yet now inhabits the illustrious soil
Of white Olympus, and delights his life
With still-young Hebe, his well-ankled wife.
Hail, king, and son of Jove! vouchsafe thou me
Virtue, and her effect, felicity.

HYMN TO ÆSCULAPIUS.

WITH Æsculapius, the physician,
That cured all sickness, and was Phœbus' son,
My muse makes entry; to whose life gave yield
Divine Coronis in the Dotian field,
(King Phlegyas' daughter,) who much joy on men
Conferred, in dear ease of their irksome pain.
For which, my salutation, worthy king,
And vows to thee paid, ever when I sing.

HYMN TO CASTOR AND POLLUX.

CASTOR and POLLUX, the Tyndarides,
Sweet Muse illustrate; that their essences
Fetch from the high forms of Olympian Jove,
And were the fair fruits of bright Leda's love.
Which she produced beneath the sacred shade
Of steep Taygetus; being subdued, and made
To serve th' affections of the Thunderer.
And so all grace to you, whom all aver
(For skill in horses and their manage given)
To be the bravest horsemen under heaven.

HYMN TO MERCURY.

HERMES I honor, the Cyllenian spy,
King of Cyllenia and of Arcady,
With flocks abounding: and the messenger
Of all th' immortals, that doth still infer
Profits of infinite value to their store,
Whom to Saturnius bashful Maia bore,
Daughter of Atlas; and did therefor fly
Of all th' immortals the society,
To that dark cave; where, in the dead of night,
Jove joined with her in love's divine delight;
When golden sleep shut Juno's jealous eye,
Whose arms had wrists as white as ivory,
From whom, and all, both men and gods beside,
The fair-haired nymph her 'scape kept undescried.
Joy to the Jove-got then, and Maia's care,
'Twixt men and gods the general messenger:
Giver of good grace, gladness, and the flood
Of all that men or gods account their good.

HYMN TO PAN.

SING, Muse, this chief of Hermes' love-got joys;
Goat-footed, two-horned, amorous of noise.
That through the fair-greens, all adorned with trees,
Together goes with nymphs, whose nimble knees
Can every dance foot, that affect to scale

The most inaccessible tops of all
Uprightest rocks ; and ever use to call
On Pan, the bright-haired god of pastoral,
Who yet is lean and loveless, and doth owe,[1]
By lot, all loftiest mountains crowned with snow ;
All tops of hills, and cliffy highnesses ;
All sylvan copses, and the fortresses
Of thorniest queaches here and there doth rove.
And sometimes, by allurement of his love,
Will wade the wat'ry softnesses. Sometimes
(In quite opposed *capriccios*) he climbs
The hardest rocks, and highest ; every way
Running their ridges. Often will convey
Himself up to a watch-tower's top, where sheep
Have their observance : oft through hills as steep
His goats he runs upon, and never rests.
Then turns he head, and flies on savage beasts,
Mad of their slaughters ; so most sharp an eye
Setting upon them, as his beams lets fly
Through all their thickest tapestries. And then
(When Hesp'rus calls to fold the flocks of men)
From the green closets of his loftiest reeds
He rushes forth ; and joy, with song, he feeds.
When, under shadow of their motions set,
He plays a verse forth so profoundly sweet,
As not the bird that in the flow'ry spring,
Amidst the leaves set, makes the thickets ring
Of her sour sorrows, sweetened with her song,
Runs her divisions varied so and strong.
And then the sweet-voiced nymphs that crown his mountains,

[1] *Owe* for own.

(Flocked round about the deep-black-watered fountains)
Fall in with their contention of song:
To which the echoes all the hills along
Their repercussions add. Then here and there
(Placed in the midst) the god the guide doth bear
Of all their dances, winding in and out;
A lynx's hide, besprinkled round about
With blood, cast on his shoulders. And thus he,
With well-made songs, maintains th' alacrity
Of his free mind, in silken meadows crowned
With hyacinths and saffrons, that abound
In sweet-breathed odors; that th' unnumbered grass
(Besides their scents) gives as through all they pass.
And these, in all their pleasures, ever raise
The blessed gods and long Olympus praise:
Like zealous Hermes, who of all I said
Most profits up to all the gods conveyed.
Who, likewise, came into th' Arcadian state,
(That's rich in fountains, and all celebrate
For nurse of flocks,) where he had vowed a grove
(Surnamed Cyllenius) to his godhead's love.
Yet even himself (although a god he were
Clad in a squalid sheepskin) governed there
A mortal's sheep; for soft love ent'ring him,
Conformed his state to his conceited trimm,
And made him long, in an extreme degree,
T' enjoy the fair-haired virgin Dryope.
Which, ere he could, she made him consummate
The flourishing rite of Hymen's honored state:
And brought him such a piece of progeny
As showed, at first sight, monstrous to the eye;
Goat-footed, two-horned, full of noise even then;

And (opposite quite to other children)
Told, in sweet laughter, he ought death no tear.
Yet straight his mother start, and fled in fear
The sight of so unsatisfying a thing;
In whose face put forth such a bristled spring.
Yet the most useful Mercury embraced,
And took into his arms his homely-faced,
Beyond all measure joyful with his sight;
And up to heaven with him made instant flight,
Wrapped in the warm skin of a mountain hare,
Set him by Jove; and made most merry fare
To all the deities else, with his son's sight;
Which, most of all, filled Bacchus with delight.
And Pan they called him, since he brought to all
Of mirth so rare and full a festival.
And thus all honor to the shepherd's king,
For sacrifice to thee, my muse shall sing.

HYMN TO VULCAN.

PRAISE Vulcan, now, muse; whom fame gives the prize,
For depth and facture, of all forge devise;
Who, with the sky-eyed Pallas, first did give
Men rules of buildings, that before did live
In caves and dens, and hills, like savage beasts:
But now, by art-famed Vulcan's interests
In all their civil industries, ways clear
Through th' all-things-bringing-to-their-ends, the year,

They work out to their ages' ends; at ease
Lodged in safe roofs from Winter's utmost prease.[2]
But, Vulcan, stand propitious to me;
Virtue safe granting, and felicity.

HYMN TO PHŒBUS.

O PHŒBUS! even the swan from forth her wings,
Jumping her proyning-bank,[3] thee sweetly sings,
By bright Peneus' whirl-pit-making-streams:
Thee, that thy lute mak'st sound so to thy beams;
Thee, first and last, the sweet-voiced singer still
Sings; for thy song's all-songs-transcending skill.
Thy pleasure then shall my song still supply,
And so salutes thee, king of poesy.

HYMN TO NEPTUNE.

NEPTUNE, the mighty marine god, I sing;
Earth's mover, and the fruitless ocean's king,
That Helicon and th' Ægean deeps dost hold.
O thou earth-shaker, thy command two-fold
The gods have sorted; making thee of horses
The awful tamer, and of naval forces

[2] Press, molestation.

[3] The bank on which she trims or dresses her wings. To *proyn* or *proin*, for "to set the wings in order," is a term in falconry.

The sure preserver. Hail, O Saturn's birth!
Whose graceful green hair circles all the earth.
Bear a benign mind: and thy helpful hand
Lend all submitted to thy dread command.

HYMN TO JOVE.

JOVE now I sing; the greatest and the best
Of all these powers that are with deity blest:
That far-off doth his dreadful voice diffuse;
And, being king of all, doth all conduce
To all their ends: who (shut from all gods else
With Themis, that the laws of all things tells)
Their fit composures to their times doth call;
Weds them together, and preserves this all.
Grace then, O far-heard Jove! the grace thou'st given;
Most glorious, and most great, of earth and heaven.

HYMN TO VESTA.

VESTA, that as a servant oversees
King Phœbus' hallowed house, in all degrees
Of guide about it, on the sacred shore
Of heavenly Pythos; and hast evermore
Rich balms distilling from thy odorous hair;
Grace this house with thy housewifely repair.
Enter, and bring a mind that most may move,
Conferring even the great in counsels, Jove:
And let my verse taste of your either's love.

HYMN TO THE MUSES AND APOLLO.

THE Muses, Jove and Phœbus, now I sing:
For from the far-off-shooting Phœbus spring
All poets and musicians; and from Jove
Th' ascents of kings. The man the Muses love,
Felicity blesses; elocution's choice
In syrup laying, of sweetest breath, his voice.
Hail, seed of Jove, my song your honors give;
And so, in mine, shall yours and others' live.

HYMN TO BACCHUS.

IVY-CROWNED Bacchus iterate in thy praises,
O Muse! whose voice all loftiest echoes raises:
And he with all th' illustrious seed of Jove
Is joined in honor; being the fruit of love
To him and Semele-the-great-in-graces:
And from the king his father's kind embraces
By fair-haired nymphs was taken to the dales
Of Nyssa; and with curious festivals
Given his fair grought,[4] far from his father's view,
In caves from whence eternal odors flew;
And in high number of the deities placed.
Yet when the many-hymn-given god had passed

[4] Growth.

His nurse's cares, in ivies and in bays
All over thicketed, his varied ways
To sylvan coverts evermore he took,
With all his nurses, whose shrill voices shook
Thickets, in which could no foot's entry fall;
And he himself made captain of them all.
And so, O grape-abounding Bacchus! be
Ever saluted by my muse and me.
Give us to spend with spirit our hours out here;
And every hour extend to many a year.

HYMN TO DIANA.

DIANA, that the golden spindle moves,
And lofty sounds as well as Bacchus loves;
A bashful virgin, and of fearful hearts
The death-affecter with delighted darts;
By sire and mother Phœbus' sister born,
Whose thigh the golden faulchion doth adorn,
I sing; who likewise over hills of shade
And promontories that vast winds invade,
Amorous of hunting, bends her all-gold bow,
And sigh-begetting arrows doth bestow
In fates so dreadful that the hill-tops quake,
And bristled woods their leafy foreheads shake;
Horrors invade the earth; and fishy seas
Impassioned furies; nothing can appease
The dying brays of beasts; and her delight
In so much death, affects so with affright

Even all inanimate natures. For while she
Her sports applies, their general progeny
She all ways turns upon to all their banes:
Yet when her fiery pleasures find their wanes,
Her yielding bow unbent, to th' ample house,
Seated in Delphos, rich and populous,
Of her dear brother, her retreats advance.
Where th' instauration of delightsome dance
Amongst the Muses and the Graces she
Gives form, in which herself the regency
(Her unbent bow hung up, and casting on
A gracious robe) assumes; and first sets gone
The dance's entry, to which all send forth
Their heavenly voices, and advance the worth
Of her fair-ankled mother; since to light
She children brought, the far most exquisite
In counsels and performances of all
The goddesses that grace the heavenly hall.
Hail then, Latona's fair-haired seed, and Jove's;
My song shall ever call to mind your loves.

HYMN TO PALLAS.

PALLAS-MINERVA'S deity, the renowned,
My muse in her variety must resound;
Mighty in councils; whose illustr'ous eyes
In all resemblance represent the skies.
A reverend maid of an inflexible mind;
In spirit and person strong, of triple kind;

Fautress of cities, that just laws maintain ;
Of Jove-the-great-in-councils' very brain
Took prime existence : his unbounded brows
Could not contain her ; such impetuous throes
Her birth gave way to, that abroad she flew,
And stood, in gold armed, in her father's view,
Shaking her sharp lance : all Olympus shook
So terribly beneath her, that it took
Up in amazes all the deities there.
All earth resounded with vociferous fear :
The sea was put up, all in purple waves,
And settled suddenly her rudest raves.
Hyperion's radiant son his swift-hoofed steeds
A mighty time stayed, till her arming weeds,
As glorious as the gods, the blue-eyed maid
Took from her deathless shoulders : but then stayed
All these distempers ; and heaven's counsellor, Jove,
Rejoiced that all things else his stay could move.
So I salute thee still : and still in praise
Thy fame, and others', shall my memory raise.

HYMN TO VESTA AND MERCURY.

VESTA I sing, who, in bequest of fate,
Art sorted out an everlasting state
In all th' immortals' high-built roofs, and all
Those of earth-dwelling men ; as general
And ancient honors given thee for thy gift
Of free-lived chastity, and precious thrift.

Nor can there amongst mortals banquets be,
In which, both first and last, they give not thee
Their endless gratitudes in poured-out wine,
As gracious sacrifice to thy divine
And useful virtues ; being invoked by all,
Before the least taste of their festival
In wine or food affect their appetites.
And thou, that of th' adorned-with-all-delights
Art the most useful angel: born a god
Of Jove and Maia ; of heaven's golden rod
The sole sustainer ; and hast power to bless
With all good all men, great Argicides,
Inhabit all good houses ; seeing no wants
Of mutual minds' love in th' inhabitants.
Join in kind blessing with the bashful maid
And all-loved virgin, Vesta ; either's aid
Combined in every hospitable house:
Both being best seen in all the gracious
House-works of mortals. Jointly follow then,
Even from their youths, the minds of dames and men.
Hail then, old daughter of the oldest god,
And thou great bearer of heaven's golden rod!
Yet not to you alone my vows belong ;
Others as well claim th' homage of my song.

HYMN TO EARTH, THE MOTHER OF ALL.

MOTHER of all things, the well-founded Earth,
My muse shall memorize; who all the birth
Gives food that all her upper regions breed;
All that in her divine diffusions feed
In under continents; all those that live
In all the seas; and all the air doth give
Winged expeditions, of thy bounties eat,
Fair children, and fair fruits, thy labor's sweat;
(O great in reverence!) and referred to thee,
For life and death is all the pedigree
Of mortal humans. Happy then is he
Whom the innate propensions of thy mind
Stand bent to honor. He shall all things find
In all abundance; all his pastures yield
Herds in all plenties; all his roofs are filled
With rich possessions: he, in all the sway
Of laws best ordered, cuts out his own way
In cities shining with delicious dames;
And takes his choice of all those striving flames.
High happiness and riches, like his train,
Follow his fortunes, with delights that reign
In all their princes. Glory invests his sons;
His daughters, with their crowned selections
Of all the city, frolic through the meads;
And every one her called-for dances threads
Along the soft flower of the clover grass.
All this, with all those, ever comes to pass,

That thy love blesses, goddess full of grace,
And treasurous angel t' all the human race.
Hail, then, great mother of the deified kind;
Wife to the cope of stars! sustain a mind
Propitious to me for my praise, and give
(Answering my mind) my vows fit means to live.

HYMN TO THE SUN.

THE radiant Sun's divine renown diffuse,
Jove's daughter, great Calliope, my muse,
Whom ox-eyed Euryphaëssa gave birth
To the bright seed of starry heaven and earth.
For the far-famed Hyperion took to wife
His sister Euryphaëssa, that life
Of his high race gave to these lovely three:
Aurora, with the rosy-wrists, and she
That owns th' enamoring tresses, (the bright moon,)
Together with the never-wearied sun;
Who (his horse mounting) gives both mortals light
And all th' immortals. Even to horror bright
A blaze burns from his golden burgonet,
Which to behold exceeds the sharpest set
Of any eye's intention: beams so clear
It all ways pours abroad. The glorious cheer
Of his far-shining face, up to his crown,
Casts circular radiance that comes streaming down
About his temples; his bright cheeks and all
Retaining the refulgence of their fall.

About his bosom flows so fine a weed
As doth the thinness of the wind exceed
In rich context, beneath whose deep folds fly
His masculine horses round about the sky,
Till in this hemisphere he renders stay
T' his gold-yoked coach and coursers; and his way,
Let down by heaven, the heavenly coachman makes
Down to the ocean, where his rest he takes.
My salutations then, fair king, receive,
And in propitious returns relieve
My life with mind-fit means; and then from thee,
And all the race of complete deity,
My song shall celebrate those half-god states,
That yet sad death's condition circulates,
And whose brave acts the gods show men that they
As brave may aim at, since they can but die.

HYMN TO THE MOON.

THE Moon, now, Muses, teach me to resound,
Whose wide wings measure such a world of ground;
Jove's daughter, decked with the mellifluous tongue,
And seen in all the sacred arts of song;
Whose deathless brows when she from heaven displays,
All earth she wraps up in her orient rays;
A heaven of ornament in earth is raised
When her beams rise. The subtle air is saised
Of delicate splendor from her crown of gold;
And when her silver bosom is extolled,

Washed in the ocean, in day's-equalled noon
Is midnight seated: but when she puts on
Her far-off-sprinkling-lustre evening weeds,
(The month in two cut her high-breasted steeds,
Maned all with curled flames; put in coach and all,
Her huge orb filled,) her whole trimms then exhale
Unspeakable splendors from the glorious sky.
And out of that state mortal men imply
Many predictions. And with her then,
In love mixed, lay the king of gods and men;
By whom, made fruitful, she Pandea bore,
And added her state to th' immortal store.
Hail, queen and goddess, th' ivory-wristed moon
Divine, prompt, fair-haired. With thy grace begun,
My muse shall forth and celebrate the praise
Of men whose states the deities did raise
To semi-deities; whose deeds t' endless date
Muse-loved and sweet-sung poets celebrate.

HYMN TO CASTOR AND POLLUX.

JOVE'S fair sons, fathered by th' Oebalian King,
Muses-well-worth-all men's beholdings, sing:
The dear birth that bright-ankled Leda bore;
Horse-taming Castor; and the conqueror
Of tooth-tongued Momus, Pollus, whom beneath
Steep-browed Taygetus she gave half-god breath,
In love mixed with the black-clouds-king of heaven;
Who, both of men and ships, being tempest driven,

When Winter's wrathful empire is in force
Upon th' implacable seas, preserve the course.
For when the gusts begin, if near the shore,
The seamen leave their ship ; and evermore
Bearing two milk-white lambs aboard, they now
Kill them ashore, and to Jove's issue vow,
When, though their ship, in height of all the roar
The winds and waves confound, can live no more
In all their hopes ; then suddenly appear
Jove's saving sons, who both their bodies bear
'Twixt yellow wings, down from the sparkling pole :
Who straight the rage of those rude winds control,
And all the high-waves couch into the breast
Of th' hoary seas. All which sweet signs of rest
To seamen's labors their glad souls conceive,
And end to all their irksome grievance give.
So, once more, to the swift-horse-riding race
Of royal Tyndarus, eternal grace.

MARGITES,

AND

THE HOMERIC FRAGMENTS.

MARGITES.

THIS Poem, which was a satire upon some strenuous blockhead, as the name implies, does not now exist; but it was so famous in former times that it seems proper to select it for a short notice from amongst a score of lost works equally attributed to the hand of Homer. It is said by Harpocration[1] that Callimachus admired the Margites; and Dion Chrysostom says[2] that Zeno the philosopher wrote a commentary on it. A genuine verse, taken from this poem, is well known:

> For much he knew, but every thing knew ill.[3]

Two other lines, in the same strain, are preserved by Aristotle:[4]

> Him or to dig or plough the gods denied,
> A perfect blockhead in whate'er he tried.

[1] In voce Margites.
[2] Diss. 53.
[3] Plato, Alcib. ii.
[4] Eth. vi. 7.

It should seem, from another place in Aristotle, that the Margites contained iambic verses; and, in fact, it appears from Harpocration that iambic lines were scattered up and down throughout the poem without any rule but the caprice of the author. One other line, less peculiar, is found in the Scholiast to the Birds of Aristophanes:[5]

Far-shooting Phœbus' and the Muses' slave.

By others, however, the Margites was attributed to Pigres, and Mr. Knight is of opinion,[6] from the use of the augment in the few lines still preserved, that it was the work of an Athenian earlier than the time of Xerxes, but long after the lowest date of the composition of the Iliad. As it seems to me, it is certainly unphilosophical to suppose a pure satire to have been produced in the dawn of heroic poetry; for, contrary to all other kinds of poems, the satire is essentially the offspring of civilized manners and a complicated and artificial state of society.

[5] Av. 914. [6] Proleg. in Hom.

THE HOMERIC FRAGMENTS.

THE Fragments, as they are called, consist of a few scattered lines, which are said to have been formerly found in the Iliad, the Odyssey, and the other supposed works of Homer, and to have been omitted as spurious or dropped by chance from their ostensible context. Besides these, there are some passages from the Little Iliad, and a string of verses taken from Homer's answers in the old work, called the Contest of Homer and Hesiod. A passage from the Little Iliad, to which I have previously alluded, is worth notice as containing an account of the fortunes of Æneas utterly at variance both with the Iliad, the Hymn to Venus, and the Æneid, and also as showing the tone and style of these works, which were so popular in former ages, but which have now almost entirely perished. The subject of the Little Iliad was the continuation of the Trojan war from the death of Hector.

> But great Achilles' glorious son led down
> The wife of Hector to the hollow ships;
> And from the bosom of the fair-haired nurse
> Seized by the foot her child, and from the tower
> Hurled headlong to dark death and final fate.
> He out of all chose Hector's bright-zoned spouse,
> Andromache, whom the assembled chiefs
> Gave to the Hero, valor's meet reward.
> And he Anchises' famous son embarked
> Captive Æneas in the seaward ship,
> 'Midst all the Greeks a great selected prize.

There is a very remarkable couplet amongst these fragments, found indeed in Plato,[1] but which seems almost Christian in its turn of thought. That thought was never expressed with more brevity or energy than thus:

> Asked and unasked, Thy blessings give, O Lord!
> The evil, though we ask it, from us ward!

Half of the following is also found in Hesiod:[2]

> Pray always to the king divine
> At bed-time, and when sacred dawn doth shine.

[1] Alcibid. ii. [2] Op. et Di. v. 339.